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Career Education and Comprehensive School Counseling: The Needs of High School Seniors

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Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the help and support of significant individuals who have helped to make this project possible. First, this author would like to thank Dr. Thomas Hernandez of the College at Brockport for his continued encouragement, advisement, and help with this manuscript and project. Second, the author would like to thank the students and staff at Webster Schroeder High School for their participation in and support of this project; especially Ty Lambert, the Director of the College and Career Center, for his unparalleled mentorship. Lastly, this author would like to thank her family and friends; particularly Nafisah Clay, Megan Kramer, Elena Pilato, Na'Lisa Rowe, Jamie Shemps and Sandra Vazquez for their friendship and unrelenting emotional support throughout this journey.

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Abstract

Current research and trends have emphasized the importance of career education and comprehensive school counseling programs in schools. To date, few researchers have asked students directly what they know and need to know for post-high school planning. The purpose of this study was to indentify the specific needs of students in order to create a comprehensive career and college counseling program for grades nine through twelve in the high school setting. A survey was given to high school seniors regarding their educational and career plans, as well as the resources they have used to make these post-secondary decisions. Results indicated that 1) there is a difference in the needs of students depending on their post high school choices; and 2) there is a need for a comprehensive school counseling program. Implications for school counselors and future research were discussed.

Career Education and Comprehensive School Counseling: The Needs of High School Seniors

Freshmen enter high school with the goal to graduate in four years ready to pursue their dreams; whether that is attending college, going straight into the workforce, entering the military or even taking a year off to explore. Whatever they may choose, schools are given the responsibility of making sure that today's students are better prepared "for the next leg of their educational journey" (National Commission on the High School Senior Year, 2001, p. 29). School counselors have become strong advocates for students as they strive to meet the challenges of the school system and prepare to make successful transitions out of high school (American School Counselor Association, 2005; Dimmitt & Carey, 2007). Comprehensive programs in academic, social-emotional and career development have been created to help school counselors prepare students to transition out of high school. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) emphasizes the importance of considering local demographic needs when integrating and adapting the National Model to create an effective counseling program (American School Counselor Association, 2005). To date, few studies have been done on the student's perception of their transition experience (Gibbons, Borders, Wiles et. al, 2006; Reid & Moore, 2008). This study focuses on the academic, career and social-emotional preparation of the students transitioning out of high school from the perspective of the high school senior. With the movement towards a proactive, comprehensive, approach to career education; it is imperative to understand the experience of students in order to create and implement such a program successfully.

Review of the Literature

There are many factors that need to be considered when creating a comprehensive school counseling program as it cannot be created based on the ASCA National Standards alone. First,

this review will look at a brief history of career education and counseling in the school system. Second, it will examine the ASCA National Model, comprehensive programs in career education and relevant career development theories. Next, the academic and career values of today's high school students will be explored, as well as their college and career decision making needs. National trends on college admissions, academics, and employment as related to the "Millennial" generation will be addressed. Lastly, this review will examine the few studies done on the career choice experiences of high school students.

Brief History of Career Education in Schools

Career education began as an attempt to incorporate career development theory into the education system (Lapan, 2004). Since the conception of school counseling in the late 1800's, the importance of school counselors competence in career and vocational guidance was seen as imperative in facilitating the educational reform. It was believed that this would lead to the economic development of the nation and informed decision making of individuals (Herr, 2001). Even in the early 20th century, Stephens (1970) reported that:

> To many leaders of the vocational reform movement…it was apparent that vocational education was but the first part of a package of needed educational reforms. They argued that a school curriculum and educational goals that mirrored the occupational structure created merely a platform and impetus for launching youth into the world of work…Without guidance experts it was argued, other efforts at reform would be aborted. (p. xiv)

In a time of vast economic and educational reform, career education and guidance in schools was born. Frank Parsons (1909), who is widely seen as the "architect" of vocational guidance in the United States, was one of the first to encourage the balance of book work with

industrial education and classes in culture and industrial science. His trait and factor approach to finding the right career is the foundation many of today's career counseling theories. From his work with high school drop outs and immigrants in the early 20th century, he showed the importance of the knowledge of oneself, the knowledge of the requirements for different lines of work, and the use of "true reasoning" to match the abilities of oneself to those of a job.

In the 1950's, researchers were beginning to realize that the trait and factor approach to career guidance was not enough. Super (1954) and the National Vocational Guidance Association defined the practice of "vocational and educational guidance" to include the study of the individual, the career, and the use of counseling skills. School counseling was gradually moving away from a reactive orientation, but to an orientation that was preventative in nature and promoted students' healthy growth and development (ASCA, 2005).

The profession of school counseling has continuously been affected by economic changes, educational reform, changes in the workforce and national policies (Herr, 2001). One major reform that effected school counselors was the conception of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA). NDEA not only provided funds to train school counselors but also lead to the creation of K-12 guidance programs. School counselors were now seen as vital in implementing the changing missions of schools (ASCA, 2005; Herr, 2001). Professionals were beginning to recognize the important role school counselors had in not only providing career education, but in preventing students from dropping out, motivating students to perform higher academically, meeting their social-emotional needs and in turn stimulating more purposeful behavior.

In the 1970's, Hoyt was instrumental in gaining recognition of the importance of career education in schools. He described career education as a collaborative effort between educators

and community leaders to help students develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to lead them to personally satisfying and meaningful job situations (Hoyt, 1976). Influenced by career development theory, research, accountability and evaluation movements, it was becoming clear that the movement towards developing comprehensive guidance programs was well on its way. Providing one-on-one encounters between counselor and student was no longer enough. It was apparent that a total educational program with a common goal of maturing the total and integrated development of the individual was needed to meet the differing needs of students. In the 1980's, the role of a school counselor continued to change from being reactive to proactive. Educational acts such as the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Educational Act of 1984 and the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) of 1988 were in full support of planned programs for career development of all students (Herr, 2001). The Perkins Act authorized the use of "guidance programs" in schools that were designed to improve, expand and extend career guidance and counseling to meet career development and employment needs of students. NOICC specifically identified competencies and behavioral indicators of each in the areas of self-knowledge, educational, and occupational exploration and career planning. These competencies were viewed as essential for the successful transition between educational levels. School counseling began and continues to evolve from a reactive, crisis-oriented service to a proactive, integrated educational program.

American School Counselor Association

The profession of school counseling has come a long way from its conception more than 100 years ago, but today's mission of schools and school counselors is not that much different than its roots: supporting academic achievement of all students so they are ready for the ever-changing world of the 21st century (ASCA, 2005). In looking at the history of the role of school

counselors, past and current research, and in an effort to keep up with educational reform, ASCA developed their National Standards in 1997 (ASCA, 2005; Dahir, 2001). This landmark document provided student content standards for school counseling programs in the areas of academic, career, and social-emotional development for kindergarten through 12th grades. These standards were not only created to help improve student achievement in school, but helped establish the overall purpose of school counseling programs and provided a way to measure achievement of such programs.

In 2001, ASCA took these standards a step further to develop the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs. As of 2001, Dahir reported that over 400 schools and districts throughout the 50 states had established comprehensive school counseling programs based on the National Standards. She also reported that over 69% of counselor education programs were using the National Standards in their curricula. This comprehensive program was revised yet again in 2005 to better help school counselors meet the academic, career and social-emotional needs of every student in response to educational reforms, a movement towards accountability, and the need to close achievement and opportunity gaps (ASCA, 2005; Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). The updated ASCA National Model is designed to be proactive by design and developmental in nature to ensure that all students, not just those who are motivated, are fully supported to be successful in school (ASCA, 2005). A comprehensive counseling program not only benefits students, but has a positive impact on parents or guardians, teachers, administrators, boards of education, school counselors, counselor educators, post secondary institutions and the community. The comprehensive program is a result-based system, which not only outlines the roles and functions of school counselors, but also lists specific competencies and indicators of desired student outcomes in each of the content areas of

academic, career and social-emotional development (See Appendix A). It also outlines delivery management and accountability systems for school counselors.

The student competencies are not all-inclusive, and ASCA (2005) emphasizes the importance of aligning the National Standards with state, school district and school building standards and documents. ASCA (2005) encourages each school to "crosswalk" the district and school's needs with the National Standards in order to guide the development of a comprehensive program that is best fit to ensure all students' success. The competencies that are used by each school are often identified through a needs assessment. The identified competencies are the foundation from which school counselors can develop strategies and activities for students to achieve social-emotional, career, and academic proficiency as they transition from grade to grade and eventually out of high school (Dahir, 2001). The National Standards also give school counselors a way to assess the impact of such counseling strategies and emphasize the importance of school counseling in the school system.

Effectiveness of Career Education in Schools

Studies on the impact of career education programs have been promising and have shown that the programs are beneficial to students. Evans and Burck's (1992) meta-analysis of 67 studies on career interventions found a consistent positive effect on academic achievement. They found that students who participated in career education interventions did better academically than those students who did not participate. Evans and Burck also found that career education programs tended to have a more positive impact on academic achievement if the program was intensive, related to their core academic subjects and was in at least its second year of implementation with the same students.

Studies have also shown that career development of all students grades K-12 are enhanced even more when school counselors fully implement the ASCA National Standards for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (Lapan, 2004). Schools that have chosen to implement the ASCA National Model are making more career and college information available to students than those schools that do not (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997). Lapan, Gysbers and Sun (1997) also found that high schools that fully implemented a comprehensive counseling program had students who reported that they were earning higher grades; they felt that their education was better preparing them for their future and they felt that their school had a more positive climate.

Comprehensive school counseling programs help counselors meet the needs of all students, including gifted students, minority students, students with learning disabilities, those students going to college and those who may enter the workforce right away (Lapan, 2004). Since many students do transition right into the workforce, it is important that counselors are helping those students transition successfully. Blustein et al. (1997) found that job satisfaction in young adulthood for those students going right into work was strongly related to the assistance and support they received from their high school counselors. Those adults who did report greater job satisfaction were able to describe how their high school counselor reached out to them in proactive ways and provided emotional, career, and academic support.

Lapan (2004) stated that effective career counseling for adolescents is essential, as satisfaction with one's work and job performance is directly linked to life satisfaction, well being, health and marital satisfaction in adulthood. The overall goal of the ASCA National model is to have every student gain real-world skills, knowledge and the attitudes needed to become a productive, multicultural citizen (Sink et. al, 2008). The content area of career

development is especially important at the high school level as students prepare for their gradual transition out of high school.

Career Development and Decision Making

While the ASCA National Standards make it easy to measure whether a counseling program is successful, the knowledge of Career Development theories is needed to create a strong foundation for an effective counseling program. In the early 1970's, Herr and Cramer (1972) discussed the value of using career development theory in order to provide the conceptual background for comprehensive counseling programs and their subsequent outcomes. There have been many well thought out theories of career development contributing to the field of career counseling. Two such theories that are relevant to explaining why people, particularly high school students, make the occupational choices they do are Super's Life-Span, Life-Space approach, as well as Duane Brown's Values-Based, Holistic Model of Career and Life-Role Choices and Satisfaction. The Life-Span, Life-Space theory explains career development as a phenomenon that takes place over the life span and also includes the interaction of life roles one may portray over their lifetime, one's self-concept, values, and how those affect career choice (Super, 1990; Super, Savickas & Super, 1996). The Value-Based model expands upon Super's theory and emphasizes the influence of values in career decision making and the importance they play in the selection and satisfaction of all of the life roles (Brown, 1995, 1996, 2002; Brown & Crace, 1996). When used together, the above theories show that people will chose their careers based on their life stage, their choice and integration of salient life roles, an understanding of self, and the values they believe to be of importance.

Donald Super's Life-Span, Life-Space

After examining developmental, differential, personality, social, phenomenological and personality psychology; Donald Super created a loosely unified set of theories he has come to call his Life-Span, Life-Space theory of career development (Super, 1990; Super et al., 1996). The theory describes three aspects of career development: life-span, life-space, and self-concept and is built upon 14 assumptions proposed by Super from his cross-theoretical research (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005; Super, 1990).

Assumptions. Super (1990) originally had 10 assumptions when he began his theory in the early 1950's, but has since expanded these to a total of 14 to account for more recent research in career development. Through his assumptions, Super (1990) contends that people will have differing personal characteristics such as values, abilities and interests; and because of their differing characteristics people can be qualified for many occupations. Super also believed that each occupation required a set of personal characteristics and abilities in the individuals that succeed in that occupation; but there is enough tolerance to allow different characteristics of individuals within each occupation, and each individual the choice of many occupations.

Super (1990) assumed that although self-concept is fairly stable after adolescence, a person's vocational preferences, their situations and in turn their self-concepts will change slightly with time and experience. This process of change in career development can be summed up in a series of life stages consisting of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. Super thought and research has shown that the nature of one's career pattern is influenced by such things as a person's parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, personal characteristics, career maturity and the opportunities presented to them (Brott, 2005; Super et al., 1996, Sverko, 2001). Career maturity is a hypothetical construct that

determines a person's success in coping with the demands of their environment at any given life stage (Super, 1990). It includes physical, psychological and social characteristics.

Super (1990) assumed that development through the five life stages could be guided by helping the individual to mature their abilities, interests and overall self-concept. He believed that career development was essentially the development and implementation of self-concepts. To Super, self-concept was the product of inherited characteristics, and occupational opportunities given to observe and try various roles. One's self-concept is synthesized by interactive learning through feedback from society. The degree of job and life satisfaction was believed to proportional to the degree to which an individual was able to implement self-concepts such as their abilities, needs, interests, values and personality traits (Super, 1996). Super's final assumption was that work and occupation provide a focus for personality organization for most men and women, although for some, other activities such as homemaking and leisure may be central as well.

Life-Span. Life itself is a developmental process constantly changing as one grows, and Super recognized how career development happens within the psychosocial development of the individual and against their contextual factors such as the society they live in and their occupational opportunities (Brott, 2005; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). He believed that the career development demands on a person are different depending on the life stage they are in, and he conceptualized career as "the life course of a person encountering a series of developmental tasks and attempting to handle them in such a way as to become the kind of person he or she wants to become" (Super, 1990, 225-226). Super (1990) conceptualized that there were five major stages of career development, each containing their own sub-stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement. Although he includes

average ages of the individuals in each stage, the time spent in each stage and the transitions between them are flexible and depend on the person's level of Career Maturity. One's Career Maturity denotes a readiness to cope with the developmental tasks at any given stage based on their individual biological and social developments (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). Career Maturity is never reached, but is a goal relative to where one is at any given time. It is both cognitive and affective, and the concept is used to help promote the development of the life-span rather than a static pattern of career development (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005; Super, 1990).

The Growth stage of career development included children ages 4 to 13 (Super et al., 1996). This was where children first experience career development and begin to develop a sense of self and an understanding of the world of work. They progress through the sub-stages of fantasy, interest and capacity and begin to learn about the importance of planning for the future. Super's second stage is Exploration, and included adolescents ages 14 to 24. The sub-stages included are tentative, transition and trial (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). Based on an accurate understanding of self, individuals at this stage clarify the occupations they may enjoy, specify an occupational choice and implement that choice by attaining a job (Super et al., 1996).

The stage of Establishment, ages 25 to 44, involves stabilizing a job, consolidating or becoming a successful producer and possibly advancing to new levels of responsibility (Super et al., 1996). This last sub-stage is not always achieved by all people. The Maintenance stage, usually ages 45 to 65, is only reached if the individual decides to stay in their established occupation (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005; Super, et al., 1996). If they decide to change, they can go back to the Exploration stage to re-crystallize their occupational choices. If they decide to stay in their current job, they will work on the tasks of holding their job, keeping up with new

advancements in their field and applying their new skills in innovative ways. Super's last stage is that of Disengagement, around age 65, when one plans for and eventually retires from the work force.

Life-Space. Super stated that "too many career theories ignore the fact that while making a living people live a life" (Super et al., 1996). Work cannot be separated from an individual's social, familial and cultural life contexts and concerns (Schultheiss, 2006). The Life-Space part of Super's theory gives the contextual dimension in which the Life-Span is taking place, and explores the many different roles an individual plays over their lifetime. Life roles can interact so that the same job may hold different meanings to two people in different situations. Super believed that over a lifetime, people play nine major roles: son or daughter, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, spouse or partner, homemaker, parent and pensioner (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). These roles tend to play out in four theaters: in the home, at school, the workplace, and the community.

At any given time, a person may play one or more of these roles at the same time. The amount of roles played at one time changes over the life-span, and the importance, or salience, of each role played changes as well (Super et al., 1996, Sverko, 2001.) One's values have a large influence on the salience of life roles chosen by an individual. Super defined value as a psychological state, a relationship or material condition that an individual seeks to attain and he believed that the importance one gives to any of the roles is dependent on the opportunity one has of attaining their salient values in a given role (Sverko, 2001). The interaction of these roles can enrich life, such as when the roles nurture each other and offer opportunities of self-expression; or make it stressful, such as when roles are at odds with each other and offer little opportunity to express what is valued by the individual (Schultheiss, 2006).

Self-Concepts. Super (1990, 1996) described how personal and contextual factors influence the constellation of life roles one plays over a life time, and showed how they interact to influence the development of one's self-concept. In addition to the process of choosing and adjusting to the life-roles in the life-space, one must use personal meaning of their abilities, interests, aptitudes and values to help make an occupational choice (Super, 1996). He believed that one's values had a great influence over occupational choice as they indicate qualities or goals sought, and they denote the degree of worth, importance and desirability of what happens at work (Knoop, 1994). Self-concept is used for understanding one's personal characteristics within the contexts their life-roles and their developmental status and in turn used to implement an occupational choice.

Duane Brown's Values Based, Holistic Model of Career Development

Duane Brown's Values Based theory of career development extends upon Super's model, and emphasizes the importance of values in career decision making (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). According to Rokeach (1973), values are beliefs containing cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions that are the basis for goal setting. This theory contends that values are both shaped by genetics and environment, and as values are crystallized, some become more important than others (Brown, 1996, 2002; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). Values also serve as standards; they determine the way needs are met in the family, at work and in the community. Research has shown that values are central to the selection of and satisfaction with life roles (Knoop, 1994; Schultheiss, 2006).

Assumptions. Brown's model is based on his own set of seven assumptions. He believed that values with high priority are the most important factor in decision making, providing that an individual has more than one choice that will satisfy their values (Brown & Crace, 1996). Each

person develops a small amount of values, and they are acquired from society as well as influenced by culture, sex, socioeconomic status, and available opportunities. Therefore there are value differences dependent on one's cultural background (Brown, 2002; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987; Sverko, 2001).

Brown's theory and research supports that satisfaction is based on making choices that coincide with one's values (Brown, 1995, 2002; Brown & Crace, 1996; Knoop, 1994). Values orient individuals towards choices and life roles that may provide desired outcomes in relation to one's crystallized goals (Brown & Crace, 1996; Judge & Bretz, 1992). Multiple roles are interconnected and individuals function holistically, thus value satisfaction in any role contributes to life satisfaction. Since roles are intertwined, Brown (1996) stressed that needs and mood related problems in other life roles will interact and affect career choices. Another assumption was that although one may be directed towards certain roles and career choices, success in any role does depends on one's abilities and aptitudes required to function in that role. Finally, Brown believed that high functioning and satisfied people have well-developed and prioritized values.

Career Decision Making. Brown (1996) believed that people made either planned or unplanned career decisions. Those making planned decisions are often at a point of transition, such as the transition of Super's life-stages, or the transition from high-school to college. Those making planned decisions are also likely to be those that have a highly developed understanding of their values, and have prioritized them. Some of their values and the associated life roles may have changed, and they may be making the choice to change careers or jobs to better coincide with their values and overall life satisfaction (Schultheiss, 2006). The second group of people are those who are making unplanned career decisions, such as those who have been laid off of a

job, forced to retire early, or other changes in other life-roles such as divorce or becoming a new parent (Brown, 1996). In either case, one's values will have an important influence in the choices and changes one makes in their career development.

Career Development and High School Students

Choosing a "successful" career has been the focus of recent career development (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003). Much of the current definitions of success include materialistic measures like being self-sustaining, and productive members of society. Super and Brown both recognized that career decisions and satisfaction cannot be taken out of the context of a person's other life-roles. According to Super (1990) adolescents are in the Exploration stage of the Life-Span and primarily engage in the roles of child and student, but they are pushed to look towards the future role of worker and choosing a possible career path. He also assumed that job and life satisfaction was reliant on how an individual was able to implement self-concepts such as their abilities, needs, interests, values and personality traits (Super, 1996). Brown's values based approach supports the idea that those who are able to identify their own values will be able to attribute worth to situations and objects, and therefore make personally satisfying career and life choices (Brown & Crace, 1996). Most high school students will be making a planned career decision by either entering the work force, joining a branch of the military, choosing to attend college, or even taking a year off . No matter what choice they make, the identification and crystallization of values is essential in choosing a satisfying career-life path. According to Super and Brown, high school students need to concentrate on increasing their knowledge of self-concept by identifying their abilities, interests, and values; and learning to link them to their career aspirations. If schools are dedicated to developing the "whole" student, it is important that schools help students find skills to understand the relationship between their self, interests,

abilities, values and their developing career identity in order to be in a position to make meaningful career and life decisions (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003; Lapan, 2004; Mosconi & Emmett, 2003).

The "Millenial" Generation

While one of the goals of a comprehensive program is to help students understand their abilities, interests and values; it is equally as important to understand the context in which they are living. One such context is the generation of which the students are a part of. Mannheim (1952) purposed that cohorts of individuals living in a common social and historical location, or a generation of individuals, will come together by drawing attention to their commonalities as well as what makes them different from other generations. Strauss and Howe (1991) expanded this idea by stating that each generation will have it's own "generational persona"; determined by common age, location, similar beliefs and behavior, and their perceived membership in the common generation. Important historical events, periods of rapid change, ideas that disrupt or challenge what is considered "normal", a period's popular culture, and the interaction with other generations are all a driving force of what brings people from the same generation together (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Although it is still important to remember the individual within the group, one cannot deny how the social and historical implications of such events contribute significantly to shaping the cognitive schemas of younger people still in their formative years of their life development, such as high school students (Coomes, 2004; Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Scott, 2000).

Research on generations split the population into four cohorts depending on when one was born. The Mature or Silent generation, those born before 1945, lived through the Great Depression, the development of the social security system and World War II (Coomes &

DeBard, 2004; Strauss & Howe, 1991). These social accomplishments earned them the reputation of being disciplined and productive; people part of this generation are said to be willing to forgo personal gratification to benefit others.

The Baby Boomers (born between 1945 and 1964) grew up in a time of post-war economic prosperity, when parenting was considered a pleasure and not an economic or biological imperative, but they often had to compete for childhood attention and jobs as a result of the high birth rates in North America during the 1950's and 1960's (Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Baby Boomers are said to be indulgent, pleasure seeking and achievement oriented, but also tend to value universalism. They are also often described as non-conformists as a result of growing up during a time of the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal; a period of "social disintegration" (Coomes & DeBard, 2004).

Generation Xers were born between 1965 and 1979; they were raised in a time of economic and social uncertainty, with increases of inflation rates, high unemployment, and an increase of divorce rates (Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Children from this generation were growing up in single parent families more than any other generation before them. This was the first generation in modern history that was thought to be worse off than their parents' generations (Howe & Strauss, 1993). Generation Xers are stereotyped as highly skeptical, independent, and are said to prefer to rely on themselves rather than expect assistance from others or their state. Since they were the first generation to live in a time of rapid change, they are also said to be more comfortable with change than stability, which is vastly different than the previous generations (Lyons et. al, 2007).

Today's high school students, and all people born between the years 1980 to present, are part of what researchers are calling the Millennial Generation (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Lyons,

Duxbury & Higgins, 2007; Tapscott, 1998). Although research on this generation is fairly new, researchers are increasingly paying more attention to Millennials as there is "an assumption that generational greatness is potentially on the horizon" (Coomes & DeBard, 2004, p. 12). This generation will be the largest cohort in the nation's history. Census figures estimate that there were over eighty million Americans born after1981, making 30% of the current population Millennials; beating out all other generations (Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Tapscott, 1998). The Millennials formative experiences have been shaped by the vast advancements in technology and an increase in globalization (Howe & Strauss, 2000). For the first time in history, children are more comfortable and literate than their parents and teachers about the technology and innovation that is central to our changing society (Tapscot, 1998). Today's students have been affected by such events as the O.J. Simpson trial, the death of Princess Diana, the Columbine High School shootings and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. They were children during a period of economic growth and decreasing crime rates, they come from families who focus on their children, and continue to live in an increasingly diversified population (Coomes, 2004).

Characteristics and Values of Millennial Students

The Millennial generation contains more classes, races, religions and social perspectives than any generation before them, yet despite these differences there are some generational themes are emerging. Like the Generation Xers, Millennials are seen to be highly comfortable with rapid and continuous change. They are confident, highly innovative, achievement oriented and independent, but prefer working in teams. Millennials can also be stereotyped as being self-absorbed as they tend to doubt traditional institutions and believe strongly in individual rights (Coomes & DeBard, 2004; DeBard, 2004; Tapscott, 1998). Howe and Strauss (2000) believe

that the Millennials will be a generation of "trends". Since the Baby Boomers, previous generation's children were showing a progressive worsening in scholastic achievement, an increased use of drugs and alcohol, more violent behaviors, suicide rates were increasing as well as increased sexual behavior. This is not true for the Millennials, which are turning over a new leaf and they are expected to become the smartest, clean-cut youths in American history.

In a study of college students done by Lyons, Duxbury and Higgins (2007), they found that despite the vast difference in generations, the Millennials seem to display more traditional values like those of the Mature generation. Compared to previous generations, they also found that Millennials tend to value power and achievement a little more, and tend to have a slightly lower regard for values such as universalism or benevolence. The Millennial generation tends to seek out careers that are meaningful to them, and place a strong importance of volunteering and service learning (DeBard, 2004). In a national survey of college-bound seniors in high school, The CollegeBoard and the Art & Science Group (Millennial Theories, 2008) found that when comparing themselves to their parents' generation; Millennial students rated themselves as more likely to want to help those less fortunate than themselves, to experience emotional problems, more adventuresome, more willing to take risks, more likely to live with someone before getting married, to wear suggestive clothing, more interested in money and wealth and feels greater pressure to achieve. Unlike any generation before them, popular culture has become increasingly more influential on the beliefs and values of Millennial students with the vast increase of ways to access the media through television, radio, magazines, newspapers and most importantly the internet (Coomes, 2004). Millennial students are different than the generations before them, and much attention needs to be placed on them as they are the future of what America is destined to become. In order for school counselors to create comprehensive school

counseling programs that address the needs of today's students, it is essential that they have a good knowledge of their individual background but also the setting they are living in.

Academic and Career Values of High School Students

According to Hoyt and Wickwire (2001), career or work values are defined as a set of values that make work seem meaningful and important. People tend to express their career values through words or actions; and are often stated as reasons for working in terms of the nature of one's occupation and in terms of how work is beneficial to the individual. Knowing one's self is essential to choosing a meaningful career, especially knowing what one values. Much of the research on career development has been focused on helping students choose a "successful" career, which is often a materialistic definition. Few studies have gone on to help student's clarify their personal values that define success (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003). High school is an opportune place and time for students to explore and help them identify their own values to develop a realistic, satisfying and future-oriented set of career and life expectations. Mosconi & Emmett (2003) found that students who participated in a values-clarification curriculum increased their number of definitions of success to include broader, more holistic, and individualistic definitions of success than those that did not participate in the curriculum. Many comprehensive counseling programs often focus solely on identifying interests and abilities, which is important, but Super (1990) and Brown (1996) showed the importance that values also play in career and life satisfaction. Adolescence is not the time to make final career choices, but their inability or lack of motivation to look towards the future may be attributed to the little attention that is paid to the impact values have on that choice (Mosconi & Emmett, 2003).

College and Career Decision Making Needs of High School Students

Brown (1996) found it essential to have a highly developed and prioritized set of values in order to make a successful planned career decision, but few studies have been done on high school students' career decision making. In a study done in Belgium, it was found that students with high levels of indecisiveness predicted lower levels of the perceived amount of information regarding oneself and the environment in the beginning of 12th grade and lower levels of decisional status at the end of 12th grade (Germeijs, Verschueren & Soenens, 2006). Students with high levels of indecisiveness were also less likely to seek out self-exploratory activities and tended to have higher feelings of anxiety regarding career choice. They also found that high levels of indecisiveness also had a negative effect on the degree of commitment a student had to their chosen field of study in higher education, as well as dissatisfaction of their choice and lower performance in their field of study. These results show the importance of a comprehensive school counseling program. Students must not only be presented with information regarding career and college choice, but encouraged to engage in behaviors to relate the information to them selves as early as possible to help decrease both feelings of anxiety and indecisiveness.

Recent Graduation Rates and College Trends

The graduating classes of the Millennial generation are getting larger every year, making college admissions and employment opportunities more competitive than ever. Over three million students were expected to graduate high school at the end of the 2007-2008 school year, exceeding the three previous years and the record high set by the Baby Boomers in the 1976-1977 school year (National Center Education Statistics, 2007). The percentage of students who have dropped out of high school (students ages 16 to 24 not enrolled in school and have neither received a high school diploma or its equivalent) has decreased from 14% in 1977 to 9% in 2006.

When questioning over seven thousand students in grades 6 through 12, Horn, Chen and Chapman (2003) found that 94% of those students planned to attend college. In the fall of 2007, a record level of 18 million students enrolled in college. By the year 2012 it is estimated that 13.3 million Millennials will be enrolled in college, and that is estimated to continue to increase through 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). The Millennial generation is said to be the most educationally ambitious generation ever, with three out of four college freshmen expecting to earn a graduate degree. They are also expected to be the most culturally diverse generation to attend college to date (Coomes & DeBard, 2004), as the enrollment of African American students has almost doubled, the number of Asian students enrolled in college tripled, and Hispanic students are the fastest growing group to enter college (DeBard, 2004; Coomes & DeBard, 2004).

Over the past few years, there has been an increase of number of students taking either or both of the college entrance exams, the SAT or the ACT. This is not surprising given the increase in students planning to attend college. The SAT Reasoning Test is a college admissions test required by most colleges for students to be considered for admission to their institution. The SAT assesses student reasoning based on knowledge and skills developed by students over their course work (The CollegeBoard, 2008). It is broken down into three parts, Critical Reading, Math and Writing and each section is scored out of a possible 800 points, making a total possible score of 2400. Since 1972, the national average scores on the critical reading section has decreased from 530 to 502 in 2008, while math scores have increased from 509 to 515. The writing portion is new and was introduced in 2006. The national average for the writing portion for 2008 was 494. A record number of students took the SAT Reasoning test in 2008, with over 1.5 million. The ACT is another college entrance exam that tests students in

four subject areas: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science; as well as an optional writing portion (The ACT, 2008). It is a curriculum based measure of college readiness, intended to link what students have already learned to what they are ready to do in the future. In 2008, over 1.4 million students nationwide took the ACT Exam receiving an average of 21.1 composite score out of a possible 36.

With college admissions become more competitive, it will be important for school counselors to understand where their college-bound students are in comparison to students all over the country, as well as have a strong knowledge of the recent college trends. A comprehensive school counseling program would allow counselors to assess and address the needs of all students as they plan for their post-high school choices.

Changing Economy and Workforce

In order for students to be prepared for their future, it is important for them to have an understanding of the world of work they will be entering. In the past two decades, the changes in the U.S. and global economy have altered the requirements for students entering the workforce. The economy which used to be based on mass production of consumer goods for a domestic market has been moving towards a global, information based economy "where success depends mainly on the quality of human resources" (Glover & Marshall, 1993). The continuing shift to a global economy, the recent trends in the workplace, technical advances and new innovations continue to challenge employee tenure and their ability to climb the corporate ladder (Feller, 2003a; Jarvis & Keeley, 2003). As world boundaries are blurred, even the notion of "job" is changing as people increasingly tend to seek meaning and fulfillment from their work and life roles (Feller, 2003b; Jarvis & Keeley, 2003). Work will indefinitely be interspersed with periods of learning as these changes continue to occur in the economy. Feller (1996) stated that, "the

workplace has little patience with employees who do not know how to take responsibility for their own learning and who think that the need to learn ends once they begin working" (p. 25). As students prepare for their futures, it is important for them to understand that learning will continue after they graduate from high school, college or even after they have chosen a career.

The 1983 report by the U.S. Department of Education, "A Nation at Risk", stated that American students achieve lower skill levels than students in other industrial nations. This report led to many educational reform initiatives that centered on increasing the rigor of curricula, establishing new learning standards, and raising graduation rates in order to ensure that all students would be able to compete in the new global economy (Dahir, 2001; Johnson, 2000). These led to the assumption that the changes in the economy simply mean more education, resulting in what Rosenbaum and Person (2003) call the "college-for-all" attitude among educators and students. Knowledge and education is a valuable commodity for workers, therefore students must take advantage of all opportunities to further their education, but this does not mean that all students must attend college (Hughey & Hughey, 1999). Barton (2002) reports that the enrollment of students in college has continued to increase, but so has the amount of students who do not complete college. This leads to the fact that while many of these students are planning for college, they may not be preparing for work. Many students and parents invest time and money in courses of study that do not align with student's career goals or employer's needs. Fottler and Bain (1984) surveyed high school seniors in Alabama and found that the majority of student's occupational choices tended to be unrealistic. Students often did not see the connection between the educational requirements and their occupational goals, or their grade point average was much lower than the education requirements for a job. When compared to their international counterparts, American students finish last in their ability to apply knowledge

to real world problems, possibly because students do not understand the connection between what is taught in the classroom and how it is used in the "real world" (Johnson, 2000).

As the job market continues to change and companies continue to grow, merge with others, get redesigned or downsized, the idea of job security is becoming less of a guarantee for anyone at any level in any organization (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003). It is becoming increasingly important for school counselors and students to follow the trends in the labor market, and help students acquire the skills that will allow them to respond appropriately to these changes (Lapan, 2004). Worker flexibility, adaptation and being able to effectively deal with change will be important career and life-management skills for students as they prepare to enter the workforce (Hughey & Hughey, 1999; Krumholtz & Worthington, 1999). Shepard (2000) found that middle school students know very little about the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for future careers, and very few knew how and where to get help with learning more about them. Academic and technical qualifications may open employment doors, but life and career management skills are what largely determine job attainment, success and advancement (Krumholtz & Worthington, 1999; Rosenbaum & Person, 2003). If these career management skills can begin to be acquired during the school years, it will better prepare students for the challenges of a new economy (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003).

These revolutions in the workforce have important implications for not only the students who are preparing to make that transition out of high school but also for the school counselors whose job it is to help make sure those students are prepared academically, personally and with regards to a future career (Feller, 2003a; Hughey & Hughey, 1999; Rosenbaum & Person, 2003). In a time when economies are ruled by global competition and technological advances, it is becoming more important to have culturally responsive career counseling services that provide a

highly effective strategy for helping students achieve more personally valued, productive and rewarding lives (Hoyt & Wickwire, 2001; Lapan, 2004). To be successful in today's workforce as in life, it is no longer about finding the right job, the right friends, or the right life-partner but about *becoming* the right worker, the right friend or the right life partner (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003).

Career Choice Experiences of Students

Every year over three million American students make the move from high school to the world of work or to further their education (Stevenson, Kochaneck and Schneider, 1998). The ASCA National model specifically states the need for school counselors to help all students prepare for the transition out of high school, implying that counselors are to be aware of the specific needs of all students. School counselors must help students link their needs and wants to themselves. To date, few researchers have asked students directly what they know about career and college planning or what services or people they believe to be helpful in their decision making process. Reid and Moore (2008) did a small, qualitative study on the academic preparedness of first-generation, urban college students. This study was done retrospectively, interviewing students already in college and was focused only on their academic preparation.

In a more comprehensive study, Gibbons et al. (2006) surveyed ninth graders to determine their current educational and career plans, what resources they were using as well as what resources they would like to help. As far as career aspirations, they found that the majority of ninth graders identified careers of interest that required a four year college degree or higher, and most planned on attended at least a community college after graduation. Students reported that they had learned about these careers mainly through television and their family, but the majority of those students had not consulted with their school counselor, had not taken a career

interest inventory, had not written a resume, or had no experience in their field of interest (either by volunteer work, a job or taken a class in that area of study). Most students did indicate that they would like information about and exposure to different careers to help with their decision making.

Of those that planned to attend college, the quality of programs available and the availability of financial aid were rated as most important when choosing a college (Gibbons et al., 2006). The students reported that they planned to attend college mostly because they needed a degree to pursue their career of interest, followed by the opportunity to get a better paying job or because they enjoyed learning. A lack of finances and academic deficits seemed to be the biggest barriers preventing students from continuing their education. At the time of the survey, more than half of the students had never visited a college or looked at college websites. This does not seem surprising as these students were only in their freshman year of high school.

In the survey done by CollegeBoard and the Art & Science Group (Millennial Theories, 2008), they also asked high school seniors about their preferences of a college education. Similar to the results of Gibbons et al. (2006), they found that nearly three-quarters of students strongly preferred a college education that enabled them to acquire values, habits and skills that would prepare them for many different opportunities; opportunities for exposure to new ideas, knowledge and intellectual challenges; and a college education where they would receive specific training and knowledge needed for a specific career. When considering colleges, of most importance to students were a range and variety of majors and programs available, a faculty devoted to teaching, availability of internships and other career opportunities as well as study abroad programs.

At the end of their senior year in high school, students are making an incredibly important life decision. Whether they recognize the importance or not, their decision will impact the options available to them in the future. The lack of research on a student's perception of their transition out of high school and knowledge of careers, college, and the world of work is surprising given the implications of their choices. Even with the background of career theory, the ASCA National Standards, and the students' contextual environment, it is imperative that researchers gauge the current understanding of students in order to adequately prepare them for where they need to be come graduation.

Summary

Herr and Cramer (1996) stated that, "career development proceeds-smoothly, jaggedly, positively, negatively- whether or not career guidance or career education exists" (p. 32). With the ever changing economy and workforce, continuing educational reform and the changing needs of students, career development and guidance programs are as important as ever before to better prepare students for their transition out of high school (Hughey & Hughey, 1999). From the literature reviewed, one can see the importance of career education in schools and its relationships to academic and social-emotional development. Therefore, the need for school counselors to implement comprehensive counseling programs is evident. The ASCA National Model gives counselors the desired outcomes of these programs, career theory and knowledge of recent college and career trends gives us a foundation to build upon, but the students understanding of self and the context in which these students are living are needed to create a curriculum that addresses the specific societal needs of students. Despite these findings, there is little research on students' knowledge of the world of work, the choices available to them or their perception of preparation with regards to their transition out of high school. Given the

importance of the choices a student makes for post-graduation, this study focuses on career development needs from the perspective of the high school senior. This research is needed to create a valuable comprehensive school counseling program for the high school setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the needs of high school seniors as they are getting ready to graduate high school. It is important for counselors to learn how they can better help students transition out of high school more successfully. The information provided on the surveys will allow the investigator to identify what the students see as key components to a career and college education program, as well as identify the school-specific ASCA model competencies that will better prepare and assist students in their transition out of high school. This information will be used in the future, in accordance with research and the ASCA National Model, to create a comprehensive curriculum for such a program for grades nine through twelve.

Method

Setting

The participants in this project were 12th grade students in a combined residential, rural and industrial suburb in the Northeast United States. The school district encompasses 51 square miles and has a population of approximately 43,000. The median income of this school district is just over $53 thousand per household. The school system serves approximately 10,000 students who attend seven elementary, two middle and two high schools. The high school used for this project enrolled a total of 1,587 students for the 2007-2008 school year. The school is split almost evenly by gender, with 52% of students are male and 48% are female. 91% of the student population at the high school is White, 3% of students are Black or Asian, and 1% of

students are Hispanic or Multi-Racial. 5% of the students in this school were eligible for free lunch and 3% qualified for reduced lunch.

There were 359 seniors enrolled at this high school for the 2007-2008 school year. The senior class was similar to the school's overall demographics. They split evenly by gender with 50% of students' male and 50% female. 93% of the senior class was classified as White, 4% Asian, 3% Black and 1% Hispanic. Post-graduation, 51% of students went on to attend a four year college, 39% attended a community college, 3% obtained jobs, 2% joined a branch of the military and 5% were considered "non-graduates". Compared to national and state averages, the average scores of students in this high school are higher on both the SAT (Critical Reading- 524, Math- 549, Writing- 505) and ACT exams (Composite- 23.4).

Participants

The entire senior class, 359 students, from one high school was asked to participate in this study. Of the 359 seniors, 210 students returned the required consent forms in order to participate in the study. Any surveys in which the multiple choice section was not completed in its entirety were discarded, leaving 178 completed surveys.

Students in their senior year were chosen for a number of reasons. First, it was important to assess the effectiveness of the current career educational program provided in the high school. Second, the survey took place in the spring of their senior year, so these students had already gone through the career/college decision making process (eg: the college application process, being accepted or denied from schools, making a post-secondary choice, signing up to serve with a military branch, applying for a job, etc.).

Materials

Since there is no survey to meet the needs of this study, a survey was created for this project based on the research on high school students including the survey done by Gibbons et al. (2006), the ASCA National Model, and relevant career development theories. The survey consisted of 28 multiple choice questions which concentrated on academic preparation, post-secondary options, influential factors on career or college choice, as well as assessed the career and college knowledge of the students. The last three questions were qualitative in nature about their post-high school choices. (See Appendix A).

Procedure

A fourth year of social studies is required by New York State, therefore in order to reach out to the entire senior class the researcher pushed into all 12th grade social studies classes offered at the high school in April of the spring semester of the school year. Students were presented a packet including a description of the study and informed consent forms for both students and parents. The researcher obtained a list of students' ages and birth dates. As of the day of the presentation to the students, they were given the appropriate consent forms dependent on their age. Students over the age of 18 were asked to sign the Informed Consent For Students and return it to their teacher the following class meeting (See Appendix B). Students 18 and under were asked to sign the Informed Consent For Minors, as well as have a parent or guardian sign the Informed Consent For Parents to participate and return both at the teacher the next class meeting. (See Appendix C and D).

Participation was voluntary and no penalties were given to nonparticipating students. Students who returned the appropriate consent forms were given bonus points on their next social studies exam by their teacher. Once all signed consent forms were returned to the

researcher, all students who returned the appropriate signed consent forms were given the confidential, direct link to the online survey via e-mail. The link to the survey was left open for a one week period and all students were asked to complete the survey in that time.

Results

The results are divided into three parts. First, the author will present the summary results of all students surveyed for each quantitative question on the survey. Second, the author will present a comparative results section and finally the qualitative responses to the last three questions of the survey will be discussed.

Results of All Students Surveyed

Table 1: *Post High School Plans of Students*

1. What are your plans after graduation?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Attend a community college	28.7%	51
Attend a 4 year college/university	62.9%	112
Full time employment	2.8%	5
Trade School	0.0%	0
Military	1.7%	3
Other (please specify)	3.9%	7
Total	**100%**	**178**

As reported above, the majority of students surveyed (91.6%) planned to attend either a two year or four year college after graduation. Of the students who answered "Other", four students reported that they planned to attend college in the future: one student mentioned they were moving and would attend college in the future, one student planned to obtain a job at a salon for a year before starting at a community college, one stated they were attending community college and serving in the military at the same time and the fourth student stated they would attend a community college before transferring to a four-year college. Of the remaining

three students who responded "Other"; two were undecided in their plans and one planned to attend a dog grooming institute.

Table 2: *Resources Used by Students for Post High School Planning*

2. What have you done/what resources have you used to prepare for your plans after high school?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Talked with family	90.4%	161
Researched information about a career (internet, CareerNet.com, "Explore Careers" on Naviance etc.)	53.9%	96
Talked with someone in my career of interest	48.3%	86
Looked at college websites	78.7%	140
Participated in job shadowing, internship, or a co-op	16.3%	29
Taken a personality type inventory (ex: "My Personality Type" on Naviance)	21.9%	39
Taken a career interest inventory (ex: "Explore Interests" on Naviance)	24.7%	44
Visited a college/trade school/military base	64.6%	115
Talked with my school counselor	54.5%	97
Worked/volunteered in my career of interest or area related to it	24.2%	43
Written a resume	29.8%	53
Taken AP/dual credit courses	52.2%	93
Used Naviance in general	25.8%	46
Total	**100%**	**178**

The majority of students (90.4%) responded that they discussed their future plans with their family. The second rated resource for students was college websites (78.7%), followed by visitations to a college, trade school or military base. The least used resource by students surveyed was participation in a job shadow, internship or co-op (16.3%).

Table 3: *Average Rating of Helpfulness of Resources Used by Students*

3. Who/what has been most helpful with your post high school plans?						
Answer Options	**Not at all helpful (1)**	**Somewhat helpful (2)**	**Helpful (3)**	**Extremely Helpful (4)**	**Rating Average**	**Response Count**
Parents/family	6	30	74	68	3.15	178
Teachers	24	68	63	23	2.48	178
Friends	25	66	75	12	2.42	178
School Counselor	30	58	59	31	2.51	178
Books	100	57	17	4	1.58	178
Newspaper/TV/Radio	113	46	14	5	1.50	178
Internet/websites	15	42	63	58	2.92	178
College brochures/visits	20	30	50	78	3.04	178
Work/internship/co-op experience	74	45	35	24	2.05	178
Total						**178**

Students surveyed rated their family (3.15/4.00) as the most helpful in making their post high school plans, followed by college visits or brochures (3.04/4.00). Students found that books (1.58/4.00) and newspapers, the TV or radio (1.50/4.00) to be the least helpful.

Table 4: *Needed Resources for Post High School Planning as Rated by Students*

4. Looking back at your years at Schroeder, what would have been helpful to better prepare you for your post high school plans?						
Answer Options	**Not at all helpful (1)**	**Somewhat helpful (2)**	**Helpful (3)**	**Extremely Helpful (4)**	**Rating Average**	**Response Count**
More parental/guardian input	22	66	68	22	2.51	178
Assistance finding & applying for a job	33	60	62	23	2.42	178
Taking career interest inventories/personality profiles etc.	45	65	46	22	2.25	178
Information on different careers	20	46	78	34	2.71	178
More time with your school counselor	23	48	70	37	2.68	178
Exposure to or experience in different careers (ex: job shadowing, internships, etc.)	15	37	61	65	2.99	178
Resume writing tips	38	60	60	20	2.35	178
Take more college prep/college credit courses in high school (ex: AP's, dual credit tech and business courses)	24	69	63	22	2.47	178
Taken an EMCC course (ex: cosmetology, culinary, auto mechanics, New Visions, etc.)	79	58	24	17	1.88	178
Study harder/better GPA	7	32	69	70	3.13	178
Get involved in more clubs/activities at school	25	61	70	22	2.50	178
Get an early start on the college search and application process	15	28	67	68	3.06	178
Total						**178**

When thinking retrospectively, students surveyed rated studying harder to obtain a better GPA (3.13/4.00) as the most helpful thing they would have done to better prepare them for their plans after graduation. Students rated courses at Eastern Monroe Career Center (EMCC) the least helpful (1.88/4.00).

Table 5: *Importance of Academics for Students*

5. How important was it for you to do well in school?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Not at all important	3.9%	7
Somewhat important	15.2%	27
Important	44.9%	80
Extremely Important	36.0%	64
Total	**100%**	**178**

The majority of students surveyed (80.9%) rated that doing well in school were either important or extremely important to them.

Table 6: *Importance of Academics for Parents/Guardians*

6. How important was it to your parents/guardians that you do well in school?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Not at all important	0.0%	0
Somewhat important	7.3%	13
Important	34.3%	61
Extremely important	58.4%	104
Total	**100%**	**178**

92.7% of students surveyed stated that it was important or extremely important to their parents/guardians that they did well in school.

Table 7: *Student Indicated Grade Point Average*

7. Please indicate the range of your current GPA:		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
100-95	6.2%	11
94-90	23.6%	42
89-85	28.1%	50
84-80	20.8%	37
79-75	12.4%	22
74-70	7.3%	13
69-65	0.6%	1
64 or below	1.1%	2
Total	**100%**	**178**

Of the students surveyed, 28.9% reported a GPA in the A range, 48.9% in the B's, and 19.7% in the C's. 1.1% of student reported a failing grade of 64 or below.

Table 8: *Student Indicated Academic Effort*

8. How would you rate your effort level in regards to achieving your GPA?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Didn't try much at all	8.4%	15
Did enough work to get by	30.3%	54
Worked hard, but there's always room for improvement	60.1%	107
Could not have possibly tried harder	1.1%	2
Total	**100%**	**178**

The majority of students reported that they worked hard throughout high school (60.1%).

Table 9: *Reasons for Attending College: Quantitative Responses*

9. If planning to attend community or a 4 year college in the fall, what are the reasons you want to go to college? (Please check all that apply)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Need degree for the job you want to pursue	79.2%	141
To get more money or a better paying job	75.8%	135
Enjoy learning	40.4%	72
Parent/Guardian's influence	57.3%	102
Friend's influence	25.8%	46
Want to further explore different career options	44.9%	80
Do not want to get a full time job just yet	15.7%	28
Not planning to attend college	3.4%	6
Other (please specify)	5.1%	9

As reported by the students, the highest rated reasons why high school seniors were attending college was that a degree was needed for the job they wished to pursue (79.2%), or because they would like to earn more money or obtain a better paying job (75.8%). A little less than half the students (44.9%) reported that they were attending college to further explore different career options, and only 15.7% were attending college because did not want to get a full time job just yet. Of the students that answered "Other", their responses included:

Table 10: *Reasons for Attending College: Qualitative Responses*

Other (please specify)
"I want something to fall back on"
"The Experience"
"Get some experience for my computer programming company"
"It's MCC anyone can get in"
"All that will take me"
"Working in a salon then going to MCC a year later"
"Completely lost"
"Play sports"
"Where I am working will pay for 50% the first year and 80% the second year"

Table 11: *Geographic Location of Colleges Applied to by Students*

10. Please indicate the general geographic area of colleges you applied to:		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
In/around Rochester (within 60 miles)	28.7%	51
Western New York	7.9%	14
New York State	30.9%	55
East Coast	18.0%	32
South	1.7%	3
West	1.1%	2
All over the USA	3.4%	6
International	0.6%	1
Did not apply to any colleges or universities	7.9%	14
Total	**100%**	**178**

The majority of students applied to schools only within New York State (30.9%) or schools within 60 miles of Rochester (28.7%). Very few students applied to schools around the United States (3.4%) and only 1 student reported applying to schools internationally.

Table 12: *Number of College/Universities Applied to by Students*

11. How many colleges/universities did you apply to?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
1-3	46.1%	82
4-6	28.1%	50
7-9	10.7%	19
10-12	1.7%	3
13+	0.6%	1
Did not apply to any college or universities	12.9%	23
Total	**100%**	**178**

Most students applied to only one, two or three colleges (46.1%).

Table 13: *Admission Rates of Students to College*

12. How many of the colleges/universities did you get accepted to?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
1-3	58.4%	104
4-6	23.6%	42
7-9	3.9%	7
10-12	0.6%	1
13+	0.6%	1
Did not apply to any colleges or universities	12.9%	23
Total	**100%**	**178**

More than half of students (58.4%) were accepted to at least 1 school.

Table 14: *Constraints to College Application: As Indicated by Students*

13. Do you feel anything constrained your college search? Even if you did not apply to any colleges, do you feel there were there any factors that stopped you from applying? (Check all that apply)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Cost/lack of finances available	38.8%	69
Academics (GPA, SAT/ACT scores)	45.5%	81
Lack of information/knowledge about college	27.5%	49
Not prepared enough/lack of confidence	23.6%	42
Family responsibilities	6.2%	11
Lack of support at home/from family	9.6%	17
Lack of support at school (from teachers, school counselors, principals etc.)	9.0%	16
I don't feel anything constrained my college search	26.4%	47
Total	**100%**	**178**

45.5% of students rated that academics constrained their college search, followed by the cost of college or lack of finances available (38.8%). Surprisingly, almost one third of the students surveyed reported that a lack of information or knowledge about college (27.5%) as well as a feeling of being unprepared or a lack of confidence (23.6%) inhibited their college search or kept them from applying at all.

Table 15: *Average Rating of Importance of Factors for Post High School Choices*

14. Please rate the following factors by importance in choosing the college/trade school/military option/job etc. in your plans for next year:						
Answer Options	**Not at all Important (1)**	**Somewhat Important (2)**	**Important (3)**	**Extremely Important (4)**	**Rating Average**	**Response Count**
Location	13	43	79	43	2.85	178
Size of school/military base/company	26	69	67	16	2.41	178
Family preference (where they wanted you to go, where they attended school or worked etc.)	63	68	35	12	1.98	178
Friend preference (where friends are going, where previous students went)	68	68	37	5	1.88	178
Academic strength/quality of programs available	7	21	79	71	3.20	178
Employment opportunities	10	29	87	52	3.02	178
Cost	11	26	86	55	3.04	178
Financial aid/scholarships available	17	34	71	56	2.93	178
Did not get into the college of my choice	83	42	29	24	1.97	178
Total						**178**

Students rated academic strength and quality of programs available as the most important factor in making their post high school choice, with an average rating of 3.20 out of 4.00. Of least importance was the preference of their friends (1.88/4.00) or family (1.98/4.00); or the fact that they did not get into the college of their choice (1.97/4.00).

Table 16: *Parent/Guardian Influence on College Attendance*

15. Did your parents/guardians want you to attend college?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yes	97.2%	173
No	0.6%	1
They had no opinion	2.2%	4
Total	**100%**	**178**

Almost all of the students surveyed reported that their parents/guardians wanted them to attend college (97.2%).

Table 17: *Family Agreement with Students Post High School Choices*

16. Does your family agree with your choices for next year?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yes	88.8%	158
No	5.6%	10
Had no opinion	5.6%	10
Total	**100%**	**178**

Most families seemed to be supportive of their students, as 88.8% of seniors reported that their families agreed with their choices for next year.

Table 18: *Student Participation of College Entrance Exams*

17. Did you take the SAT and/or ACT?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yes	83.1%	148
No	16.9%	30
Total	**100%**	**178**

83.1% of students reported taking one or both of the required college entrance exams.

Table 19: *Student Participation of Practice College Entrance Exams*

18. Did you take the appropriate practice exam(s)? (PSAT and/or PLAN)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yes	66.9%	119
No	33.1%	59
Total	**100%**	**178**

Compared to those that took college entrance exams, a smaller percentage of students (66.9%) took the appropriate practice exams.

Table 20: *Student Indication of Helpfulness of Practice College Entrance Exams*

19. If yes, did you find the practice exams helpful in studying/preparing for the SAT and/or ACT?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Not at all helpful	15.2%	27
Somewhat helpful	28.7%	51
Helpful	21.3%	38
Extremely Helpful	5.6%	10
Did not take the PSAT/PLAN	29.2%	52
Total	**100%**	**178**

Of those that took the practice PLAN and/or the PSAT, only about one third (26.9%) of students reported that they were helpful or extremely helpful in preparing for the ACT and/or SAT.

Table 21: *Career Aspirations of Students*

20. Do you know what career/general area of study you would like to eventually pursue?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Unsure at this time	11.8%	21
There are a couple of things I would like to explore	19.1%	34
Have a pretty good idea	37.1%	66
Know exactly what I want to do	32.0%	57
Total	**100%**	**178**

At the time of administration of the survey, over two thirds of students (69.1%) had at least a good idea of a career or general area of study they wished to pursue. For this question, students were given the option of listing their intended career choice or area of study. Of the 58 students who gave a response; answers were grouped together by occupational job family. 17% of students reported that they would pursue a career within the field of Business, 14% of students mentioned a career in Education, 12% reported an interest in Engineering or Architecture, 9% students expressed an interest in Journalism or Communications, and 7% of students reported careers in the following categories of Animal Sciences, Fine Arts and Design, Medical, and Computer related fields. There were a small percentage of students interested in Community and Social Sciences (5%), 3% of students indicated an interest in either a Service Related Field or Entertainment, and only 2% of students were interested in Law Enforcement or Military, Legal Studies and English.

Table 22: *Level of Education Required for Careers of Interest*

21. What is the education level required for your career(s) of interest?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Trade school, 2 years associate's degree or specialized job training/certification	11.2%	20
A 4 year bachelor's degree	34.8%	62
Master's degree or higher	38.2%	68
Education level unclear	15.7%	28
Total	**100%**	**178**

To pursue their careers of interest the majority of students (73%) plan to obtain at least a bachelor's degree. Surprisingly, 15.7% of students did not know what education level they would need to obtain for their career of interest.

Table 23: *Length of Interest in Chosen Career*

22. How long have you been interested in your chosen career/area of study?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
2 years or more	53.4%	95
12-24 months	24.7%	44
3-12 months	13.5%	24
Less than 3 months	8.4%	15
Total	**100%**	**178**

While 78.1% of students have been interested in a career for at least one year, over half (53.4%) have been interested for over two years.

Table 24: *Sources of Education for Careers of Interest*

23. What is the main way you learned about this career? (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Television, radio, newspaper or other media	28.1%	50
Parents/family members	60.7%	108
Classes	41.0%	73
Friends	35.4%	63
Teachers	35.4%	63
Books	18.5%	33
Internet	47.2%	84
School counselor	10.1%	18
Real life experience (job, internship, job shadow, co-op etc.)	45.5%	81
Total	**100%**	**178**

Again, parents and family members seem to be an important resource for students as 60.7% reported that it was the mail way they learned about their career of interest, followed closely by the internet (47.2%) and real life experience (45.5%). The least amount of students (10.1%) reported their School Counselor as a main way to learn about a career.

Table 25: *Importance of Factors for Career Choice*

24. What is most important to you when choosing a career?						
Answer Options	**Not at all important**	**Somewhat important**	**Important**	**Extremely Important**	**Rating Average**	**Response Count**
Whether you will enjoy the career, will be passionate about what you do	3	6	39	130	3.66	178
Whether you can be successful in the career	4	9	66	99	3.46	178
Money/salary	4	33	78	63	3.12	178
Prestige of job (the reputation with the career)	15	49	89	25	2.70	178
Current availability/job outlook (is there a need for your career?)	8	36	97	37	2.91	178
What your parents/family want you to do	53	82	36	7	1.98	178
What your friends are doing	122	42	11	3	1.41	178
Total						**178**

Students reported that the most important factor in choosing a career was a passion for the career or a career they would enjoy with an average rating of 3.66 out of 4.00. Success in a career (3.46/4.00) and the expected income from a career (3.12/4.00) were also rated as important. Of least importance for choosing a career were the choices of their friends, with an average rating of 1.41 out of 4.00.

Table 26: *Students Perceptions of Academic Preparation for Post High School Plans*

25. Do you feel your academic experience at Schroeder has prepared you for your post high school plans?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Not at all	8.4%	15
Somewhat	33.1%	59
I feel adequately prepared	54.5%	97
I couldn't feel more prepared	3.9%	7
Total	**100%**	**178**

More than half of students (54.4%) felt adequately prepared for their post high school plans from their academic experience at Schroeder, while only 8.4% of students did not feel prepared at all.

Table 27: *Students Perceptions of Social/Emotional Preparation for Post High School Plans*

26. Do you feel emotionally/socially prepared for post high school plans?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Not at all prepared	5.1%	9
Somewhat prepared	18.5%	33
There are a few things I might be nervous about, but generally I feel prepared	55.1%	98
I'm very confident that I am prepared for the next step	21.3%	38
Total	**100%**	**178**

More than half of students (55.1%) felt they are generally emotionally and socially prepared for their post high school plans.

Table 28: *Post High School Living Arrangements of Students*

27. Next year I plan to:		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Live at home	22.5%	40
Live on my own or with roommates in housing provided by college, trade school, military, job (dorms, townhouses, military base etc.)	62.9%	112
Live on my own or with roommates in housing NOT provided by college, trade school, military, job (house, apartment, townhouse etc.)	11.8%	21
Other (please specify)	2.8%	5
Total	**100%**	**178**

The majority of students surveyed (74.7%) plan to move out of their current home to live on their own or with roommates. Of the five students who chose "Other", one student said they planned to live with their family (but did not specify where) and three reported that they were unsure of where they would live at the time. One student did not take the activity seriously and therefore his response was not reported.

Table 29: *Students Indications of Needed Preparation for Post High School Plans*

28. What are some activities you might have liked to have experienced or general areas of knowledge you would have liked more information on to better prepare for your post high school plans? (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Academic preparation (ex: what college/trade school classes will be like, typical class schedule, go over a course syllabus, etc.)	61.2%	109
Career preparation (ex: how to apply for a job, help with resume writing, making the right career choice, etc.)	58.4%	104
Social/emotional preparation (ex: what dorm/apartment life is like, how to budget finances, talking about living with roommates, time management skills, etc.)	43.3%	77
I don't think any of the above would have been helpful	15.7%	28
Total	**100%**	**178**

Most students reported that they would have liked more preparation in all of the areas of academic (61.2%), career (58.4%) and social/emotional (43.3%) before graduating high school.

Comparative Results

Some of the questions were broken down to further see if there was a difference in the needs of students who plan to attend a four year college, a two year or community college or those students who choose not to attend college at this time.

Table 30: *Comparative Results: Resources Used by Students for Post High School Planning*

2. What have you done/what resources have you used to prepare for your plans after high school?			
Answer Options	**4-Year College**	**2-Year College**	**Non-College**
Talked with family	93.8%	86.3%	80.0%
Researched information about a career (internet, CareerNet.com, "Explore Careers" on Naviance etc.)	56.3%	52.9%	40.0%
Talked with someone in my career of interest	52.7%	43.1%	33.3%
Looked at college websites	89.3%	68.6%	33.3%
Participated in job shadowing, internship, or a co-op	18.8%	11.8%	13.3%
Taken a personality type inventory (ex: "My Personality Type" on Naviance)	28.6%	11.8%	6.7%
Taken a career interest inventory ("Explore Interests" on Naviance)	28.6%	19.6%	13.3%
Visited a college/trade school/military base	83.0%	35.3%	26.7%
Talked with my school counselor	57.1%	47.1%	60.0%
Worked/volunteered in my career of interest or area related to it	25.0%	25.5%	13.3%
Written a resume	37.5%	17.6%	13.3%
Taken AP/dual credit courses	66.1%	31.4%	20.0%
Used Naviance in general	27.7%	27.5%	6.7%

No matter their plans for next year, students seemed to find their family as a significant resource for their post-high school plans. Students who did not plan to attend college seemed to rely less on the use of College websites and programs such as Naviance- a web-based career, college and academic planning program used by the school. Those students who planned to attend a two year college (47.1%) seemed to use their counselor as a resource less than those planning to attend a four year college (57.1%) as well as those not planning to attend college (60%).

Table 31: *Comparative Results: Average Rating of Helpfulness of Resources Used by Students*

3. Who/what has been most helpful with your post high school plans?			
Answer Options	**4-Year College Avg. Rating**	**2-Year College Avg. Rating**	**Non-College Avg. Rating**
Parents/family	3.38	2.78	2.67
Teachers	2.63	2.27	2.00
Friends	2.47	2.37	2.13
School Counselor	2.60	2.37	2.33
Books	1.64	1.55	1.20
Newspaper/TV/Radio	1.47	1.61	1.33
Internet/websites	3.15	2.65	2.13
College brochures/visits	3.45	2.55	1.73
Work/internship/co-op experience	2.07	1.96	2.20

On average, those planning to attend a four year college rated their Parents/Family, Internet/Websites, and College visits as more helpful in their post high school planning than those going to two year colleges or not at all. Overall, those not planning to attend college rated all of the options above as less helpful than those students planning to attend either a four or two year college.

Table 32: *Comparative Results: Needed Resources for Post High School Planning*

4. Looking back at your years at Schroeder, what would have been helpful to better prepare you for your post high school plans?			
Answer Options	**4-Year College Avg. Rating**	**2-Year College Avg. Rating**	**Non-College Avg. Rating**
More parental/guardian input	2.57	2.41	2.33
Assistance finding & applying for a job	2.37	2.47	2.67
Taking career interest inventories/personality profiles etc.	2.21	2.35	2.27
Information on different careers	2.73	2.73	2.47
More time with your school counselor	2.71	2.73	2.33
Exposure to or experience in different careers (ex: job shadowing, internships, etc.)	3.13	2.78	2.67
Resume writing tips	2.46	2.27	1.73
Take more college prep/college credit courses in high school (ex: AP's, dual credit tech and business courses)	2.61	2.24	2.20
Taken an EMCC course (ex: cosmetology, culinary, auto mechanics, New Visions, etc.)	1.71	2.06	2.60
Study harder/better GPA	3.16	3.12	3.00
Get involved in more clubs/activities at school	2.54	2.33	2.73
Get an early start on the college search and application process	3.14	2.96	2.73

Overall, no matter the plans of the student they tended to rate the resources about the same. Non-College Students did rate taking courses at Eastern Monroe Career Center (EMCC) as more helpful than those who plan to attend either a two or four year college.

Table 33: *Comparative Results: Importance of Academics for Students*

5. How important was it for you to do well in school?			
Answer Options	**4-Year College**	**2-Year College**	**Non-College**
Not at all important	2.7%	3.9%	13.3%
Somewhat important	7.1%	23.5%	46.7%
Important	41.1%	58.8%	26.7%
Extremely Important	49.1%	13.7%	13.3%

Almost half (49.1%) of those students attending a four year college rated that it was "Extremely Important" for them to do well in school. More than half students attending a two year college (58.8%) rated that it was "Important" while almost half of those not attending college (46.7%) only rated it "Somewhat Important".

Table 34: *Comparative Results: Importance of Academics for Parents/Guardians*

6. How important was it to your parents/guardians that you do well in school?			
Answer Options	4-Year College	2-Year College	Non-College
Not at all important	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Somewhat important	4.5%	13.7%	6.7%
Important	33.9%	35.3%	33.3%
Extremely important	61.6%	51.0%	60.0%

Despite the differing plans of students, in general parents/guardians found it extremely important for their students to do well in school.

Table 35: *Comparative Results: Student Indicated Grade Point Average*

7. Please indicate the range of your current GPA:			
Answer Options	4-Year College	2-Year College	Non-College
100-95	8.0%	3.9%	0.0%
94-90	34.8%	3.9%	6.7%
89-85	35.7%	17.6%	6.7%
84-80	14.3%	33.3%	26.7%
79-75	7.1%	21.6%	20.0%
74-70	0.0%	17.6%	26.7%
69-65	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%
64 or below	0.0%	2.0%	6.7%

Almost half (42.8%) of those students attending a four year college reported having a GPA between 90-100. 73.4% of those not attending college reported having an average between 70-79, and the majority of those attending a two year college (72.5%) reported a GPA between 80-89.

Table 36: *Comparative Results: Student Indicated Academic Effort*

8. How would you rate your effort level in regards to achieving your GPA?			
Answer Options	4-Year College	2-Year Students	Non-College
Didn't try much at all	4.5%	13.7%	20.0%
Did enough work to get by	19.6%	43.1%	66.7%
Worked hard, but there's always room for improvement	74.1%	43.1%	13.3%
Could not have possibly tried harder	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%

On average, those students attending a four year college reported that they worked harder than those who plan to attend a two year college or those not attending college.

Table 37: *Comparative Results: Parent/Guardian Influence on College Attendance*

15. Did your parents/guardians want you to attend college?			
Answer Options	**4-Year College**	**2-Year College**	**Non-College**
Yes	100.0%	94.1%	86.7%
No	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%
They had no opinion	0.0%	5.9%	6.7%

Despite their post-graduation choices, the majority of students stated that their parents/guardians wanted them to attend college.

Table 38: *Comparative Results: Family Agreement with Students' Post High School Choices*

16. Does your family agree with your choices for next year?			
Answer Options	**4-Year College**	**2-Year College**	**Non-College**
Yes	96.4%	82.4%	53.3%
No	2.7%	5.9%	26.7%
Had no opinion	0.9%	11.8%	20.0%

Those attending college (four or two year) appeared to have more family support than those not attending college.

Table 39: *Comparative Results: Student Participation in College Entrance Exams*

17. Did you take the SAT and/or ACT?			
Answer Options	**4-Year College**	**2-Year College**	**Non-College**
Yes	99.1%	68.6%	13.3%
No	0.9%	31.4%	86.7%

A large percentage of those students not attending college (86.7%) did not take any college entrance exam.

Table 40: *Comparative Results: Student Participation in Practice College Entrance Exams*

18. Did you take the appropriate practice exam(s)? (PSAT and/or PLAN)			
Answer Options	4-Year College	2-Year College	Non-College
Yes	78.6%	58.8%	6.7%
No	21.4%	41.2%	93.3%

The majority of those students not attending college (93.3%) did not take the appropriate practice college entrance exams, and only a little over half (58.8%) of those attending a two year college took the exams.

Table 41: *Comparative Results: Career Aspirations of Students*

20. Do you know what career/general area of study you would like to eventually pursue?			
Answer Options	4-Year College	2-Year College	Non-College
Unsure at this time	8.0%	15.7%	26.7%
There are a couple of things I would like to explore	14.3%	27.5%	26.7%
Have a pretty good idea	45.5%	25.5%	13.3%
Know exactly what I want to do	32.1%	31.4%	33.3%

Those attending a four year college tended to have a better idea of the career or general area of study they would like to pursue than those attending a two year college or not at all.

Table 42: *Comparative Results: Level of Education Required for Careers of Interest*

21. What is the education level required for your career(s) of interest?			
Answer Options	4-Year College	2-Year College	Non-College
Trade school, 2 years associate's degree or specialized job training/certification	1.8%	25.5%	33.3%
A 4 year bachelor's degree	36.6%	39.2%	6.7%
Master's degree or higher	53.6%	9.8%	20.0%
Education level unclear	8.0%	25.5%	40.0%

The largest percentage (40%) of students unsure of what education level is needed for a career of interest is those that are not planning to attend college.

Table 43: *Comparative Results: Importance of Factors for Career Choice*

24. What is most important to you when choosing a career?			
Answer Options	4-Year College Avg. Rating	2-Year College Avg. Rating	Non-College Avg. Rating
Whether you will enjoy the career, will be passionate about what you do	3.75	3.55	3.40
Whether you can be successful in the career	3.60	3.33	2.87
Money/salary	3.19	3.14	2.60
Prestige of job (the reputation with the career)	2.75	2.65	2.47
Current availability/job outlook (is there a need for your career?)	2.97	2.86	2.67
What your parents/family want you to do	2.03	2.00	1.60
What your friends are doing	1.36	1.53	1.40

Despite their differences in pathways to their career of interest, there seemed to be no difference between the students rating of importance for factors when considering a career.

Table 44: *Comparative Results: Students Perceptions of Academic Preparation for Post High School Plans*

25. Do you feel your academic experience at Schroeder has prepared you for your post high school plans?			
Answer Options	4-Year College	2-Year College	Non-College
Not at all	1.8%	11.8%	46.7%
Somewhat	24.1%	51.0%	40.0%
I feel adequately prepared	67.9%	37.3%	13.3%
I couldn't feel more prepared	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%

Almost half of students not planning to attend college (46.7%) indicated that their high school academic experience did not prepare them for their post high school plans. Half those students planning to attend a two year college (51%) indicated that they were somewhat prepared academically, whereas more than two-thirds of those planning to attend a four year college (67.9%) felt adequately prepared academically.

Table 45: *Comparative Results: Students Perceptions of Social/Emotional Preparation for Post High School Plans*

26. Do you feel emotionally/socially prepared for post high school plans?			
Answer Options	**4-Year College**	**2-Year College**	**Non-College**
Not at all prepared	1.8%	7.8%	20.0%
Somewhat prepared	13.4%	25.5%	33.3%
There are a few things I might be nervous about, but generally I feel prepared	62.5%	43.1%	40.0%
I'm very confident that I am prepared for the next step	22.3%	23.5%	6.7%

More than half (53.3%) of student not planning to attend college indicated that they were not at all prepared or only somewhat prepared socially or emotionally. Students planning to attend a four year college (84.8%) or those attending at two year college (66.6%), most of these students felt at least generally prepared for their next step.

Table 46: *Comparative Results: Post High School Living Arrangements of Students*

27. Next year I plan to:			
Answer Options	**4-Year College**	**2-Year College**	**Non-College**
Live at home	3.6%	58.8%	40.0%
Live on my own or with roommates in housing provided by college, trade school, military, job (dorms, townhouses, military base etc.)	92.0%	15.7%	6.7%
Live on my own or with roommates in housing NOT provided by college, trade school, military, job (house, apartment, townhouse etc.)	2.7%	21.6%	46.7%
Other (please specify)	1.8%	3.9%	6.7%

Depending on the student's choice for next year, the living arrangements of students differ greatly. Almost all of those planning to attend a four year college (92%) indicate they will live in housing provided by the school, such as a dorm. More than half (58.8%) of students attending a two year college plan to live at home, while most student not attending college (46.7%) plan to live on their own or with a roommate not provided by their job, such as an apartment.

Table 47: *Comparative Results: Students Indication of Needed Preparation for Post High School Plans*

28. What are some activities you might have liked to have experienced or general areas of knowledge you would have liked more information on to better prepare for your post high school plans? (check all that apply)			
Answer Options	**4-Year College**	**2-Year College**	**Non-College**
Academic preparation (ex: what college/trade school classes will be like, typical class schedule, go over a course syllabus, etc.)	65.2%	60.8%	33.3%
Career preparation (ex: how to apply for a job, help with resume writing, making the right career choice, etc.)	59.8%	56.9%	53.3%
Social/emotional preparation (ex: what dorm/apartment life is like, how to budget finances, talking about living with roommates, time management skills, etc.)	44.6%	39.2%	46.7%
I don't think any of the above would have been helpful	10.7%	23.5%	26.7%

No matter the plans of the students, the majority of them indicated that they would have liked more academic, career and social/emotional preparation for life after high school.

Qualitative Items

The last three questions on the survey were qualitative in nature and asked students to write in their own answer. The summary of all students' responses will be discussed by question.

Student-Related Preparation

In the first qualitative question, students were asked what they would have done differently to better prepare for their transition out of high school. The majority of the responses were related to an increase of efforts in regards to their academic performance. Students responded that they would have "tried harder", "worked harder to towards a better GPA", and that they would have "worked harder throughout high school to achieve better grades and get into better schools." Most of the students' responses seemed to indicate that the students saw the connection between academic achievements in high school to their career futures. Other students

mentioned that they wished they had better work ethics to prepare them for what lies ahead, "Probably could have had a better work ethic and gotten better grades so I would have a better shot at scholarships. That and I would have liked to have taken more APs, going along with that work ethic thing, too."

Many of the responses were also related to career and college planning and development. A vast majority of the students mentioned they would have liked more experience in a job or internship related to their career of interest, or that they would have liked to go on more college visits. Some students mentioned that they wished they were more motivated when it came to their college and career search. Many students had responses similar to this student,

> "I think starting early, as in freshman year would have been very helpful. One issue I ran into was time! If I had more time I may have applied to more colleges though I am happy with my final choices. I would recommend starting the college / career search very early on."

Although this question was geared towards the student, a large number of students mentioned that they would have wanted more time with their counselor. Students responded that they wanted more, "one on one help with selecting a college and scholarship help" or that "many of the counselors you have to fight for their time". Some students responded that if they could do it all over again, they would have prepared themselves socially and emotionally for the transition out of school. Students said they would have liked to have joined clubs in high school and would have started becoming more independent earlier on. Others said that leaving home was going to be hard for them; one student mentioned that she would have liked to, "get over my shyness when it comes to meeting to new people. Gain confidence in myself AND in my working abilities; get over my fear of public speaking."

Counselor-Related Preparation

Students were next asked what their counselor could have done or anything the students would have liked more of from their counselor to help them better prepare for their transition out of high school. Although many of the students reported that they were happy with the support they were given from their counselors, most of the students mentioned that they would like more time with them, both one-on-one and in a group or psycho-educational setting. Overwhelmingly they mentioned that counselors were often unavailable when needed and overall they expressed they would have benefited from more time with and information from their counselor. Students seemed to realize the importance of starting to plan early and wanted more help and direction with their goals; and even gave specific suggestions such as, "talked to us about college as early as the ninth grade because it comes up really fast and we didn't have enough information soon enough." Another student said, "more one on one time with every single individual student discussing post secondary education/jobs." Students also suggested that counselors should, "meet with the students at least 4 times a year and talked about grades and goals and future plans" or "gotten more involved individually with students helping them with their own specific problems." Many of the students were happy with their counselors and indicated that they were helpful, but often mentioned that, "I wish I had more one on one time with my counselor. I feel that I did have a lot of time with him, but I wish I had more or went to him more often."

Suggestions for Future Students

The high school seniors were next asked to provide any advice they would give to underclassmen as they prepared for their eventual transition out of high school. Once again, academic achievement and effort seemed to be an overwhelming response. Students encouraged their younger classmates to, "work hard and try to get good grades so that you can get into the

schools of your choice." They also emphasized the importance of starting to work on their career development as soon as possible. Many students touched upon the importance of exploring and developing the entire self; academically, socially, emotionally and in terms of a career. One student said,

> "Work hard, in all your classes. Don't think that just because it's an elective you don't have to get a good grade, don't slack off in gym class or anything either. You may not agree with it but your grades do count. Colleges will look at your high school years (all 4) and every important test you take. Start early in the college search and you will be less stressed and more happy in the end. Take some time to apply to different colleges and to explore what they have to offer. It's easy to pretend you don't care, or say you don't have time... but it will take a large burden off of you once you get it all done. Apply early, and be confident about your resume. Also, get a job! Start exploring possible career opportunities if possible. Xerox and other large local companies sometimes offer small jobs over the summer or co-ops... take the time to explore! Oh, and try to have some fun!"

Many of the high school seniors encouraged the underclassmen to challenge themselves with Advanced Placement courses, and those that offer college credits. One student said,

> "Make the choices YOU want to make for your future and start now, don't just drift on down taking only the basic classes. Take an extra class or two or even an AP- who knows it might come in handy some where down the line."

A number of the students touched upon the importance of the choices they need to make senior year, as well as the personal meaning that is behind it,

> "Don't do something just because your best friends or boyfriends/girlfriends are doing it. This is YOUR future and even though they may not be there in four years, you will be still. And you need to make sure your reasons for looking at a certain college or major are all personal and for yourself. Not for anyone else. If you do do it for someone else, you will regret it."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess the needs of high school seniors as they are preparing to transition out of the high school setting. The survey was used to assess their current level of preparation, as well as what resources they have used throughout high school to make their post secondary choices. It also examined the potential differences in the needs of students based on their post-high school choices. From the results it can be inferred that there is a difference in the needs of students based on their post high school choices, but all students surveyed still felt the need for more help and support across the board when preparing for their transition out of high school. In conjunction with the results of this study and the research on career development, it is clear that there is a need for a comprehensive school counseling program to better address the needs of students.

Interpretation of Results

Similar to previous research, 91.6% of students planned to attend either a four or two year college next year (Horn et al., 2003). Overall, academic achievement seemed to be important to all students as 80.9% of those surveyed indicated that it was "Important" or "Extremely Important" to them to do well in school. As seniors, they seemed to see the direct relationship between academic achievement in high school and their post high school plans, but their answers to the open ended questions seemed to indicate that they may not have seen the

connection earlier in high school. Although academic achievement was rated as important, most students indicated that they would have tried harder in high school so that they could have more options open to them post graduation. 45.5% of those students surveyed indicated that their academic achievement constrained their college search or kept them from applying to college at all. Research has shown that it is essential to link what students are doing in the present to their future goals so they can understand the importance of their high school achievement, therefore a comprehensive school counseling program beginning early in high school is important for a student's total development (Reid & Moore, 2008).

From the results of the survey, family seemed to be the most important resource used by all students in order to help make their career decisions. Over 90% of the students reported that they talked to their parents about their choices, and parents were rated more helpful than any other resource. This is similar to previous research done on career development. Dick and Rallis (1991) found that high school seniors interested in the field of engineering or science noted parents as more influential on a career choice than teachers.

When broken down by post high school choice, there seemed to be a disparity between those going to a four year college, a two year college or not attending college. While Gibbons et al. (2006) found gender differences in the needs of 9th graders; no one has investigated the differences between students dependent on their post graduation plans. This study found that those planning to attend a four year college used more career preparation resources, they indicated a higher knowledge of careers, reported a higher grade point average, and a higher level of effort regarding their academics. They were also more likely to take college entrance exams and reported feeling better prepared academically, socially, emotionally and in terms of a career than those attending a two year college or those not attending college. When asked the

education level required for their career of interest, 40% of students not attending college responded that the level was unclear and 20% indicated that a master's degree or higher was needed. From the results, it seems that those planning to attend college are overall more prepared for the next leg of their journey than other students.

Limitations

Although there is much to learn about the needs of high school students, there are several limitations that affect the generalizability of this study. First, this sample was drawn from a single high school in the Northeast United States with predominately white students. This study was done in order to find the specific needs of the students at that particular school, therefore it cannot be used to asses the needs of high schools students in diverse settings, such as rural and urban schools where the demographics of the student population may be vastly different. The results could be combined to create a larger, more diverse sample of students. Second, there was a lack of demographic information collected from the survey, so there was no way to assess differences between students or compare that to previous research. Also, the majority of students who responded to this survey indicated that they were college bound students. These limitations will be addressed in Recommendations for Further Study.

Recommendations for Further Study

Gibbons et al. (2006) found the needs of 9th grade students to be different based on their gender, ethnicity, or if they were a first generation college student. Future studies should include such demographic questions to address the differing needs between students. It would also be of interest to survey students that receive special education services at school, as their needs may be different than other students and could help counselors deliver a more complete program. In

order to generalize to the larger population, future surveys should be given to high school seniors across the United States in different settings such as urban and rural.

Although 78.1% of students reported that they were interested in a career for at least one year, students did not indicate using resources that were associated with defining their interests and career values such as using Naviance, working with their school counselor or hands on experience in a career of interest. Super (1990) and Brown (1996) emphasized the importance of exploring and crystallizing career values and interests in order to make a planned, well informed career choice, yet most students do not seem to be participating in those activities. Maybe students are not aware of how these activities can be helpful or why it is important to crystallize their interests, abilities and values. The research done by Evans and Burck (1992) showed that comprehensive programs are most effective when they are in at least their second year. Since many of these activities such as the interest and career values inventories were new to students this year, future surveys should be given to each grade level every year to assess their current levels of understanding regarding career choices and what resources they currently use. This can be used not only to help counselors improve the use and understanding of the resources by students, but it could be used to track each student's progress from ninth to twelfth grade.

No matter what the student chose to do following graduation, choosing a career in which they would be passionate about or enjoy was rated as most important. Are they purely based on ability or interest in a field, or are students considering their future life roles and how a job may affect those? Given the importance of Super's life roles and career values, research should explore how students are making these career choices; what values they are using to consider a career and what life roles they see themselves in the future (Super, 1990).

Given the many differences between students who plan to attend a four year college, a two year college or not at all; raises many questions; 1) are those students not attending a four year college because they have not taken advantage of the resources or is the school system not addressing their different needs? 2) Are students not attending a four year college because their grades are lower than that needed for acceptance or do students already know that they are not on a career track that requires a bachelors degree or higher? 3) Are student obtaining career and college information too late in their high school experience? 4) How do school counselors address the academic, social and career needs of those students who do not plan to attend college? Future studies should further investigate why students are making the choices they are in order to create a comprehensive program that allows students to make the post secondary choices that are truly right for them, not because it was their only option or the only thing they knew about.

This study found that families had a strong influence over the post secondary choices a student made. In the study done by Gibbons et al. (2006), they gave a brief survey to parents of the ninth graders. The majority expressed concerns about maintaining their students' motivation, focus and confidence. Parents in the Gibbons et al. study indicated that they talked to their students about careers, college and interests and the need for good grades and competitive coursework, but few parents took action to help their students make a decision. A few parents indicated that they provided encouragement for their students and their decisions and but even fewer took their students to visit college or looked at college websites. This lack of extensive family help is not surprising given that those surveyed were parents of 9th graders, but would this change as students progressed through high school? Given the importance that families play in a

student's post high school decision, future studies should evaluate their knowledge on career and college planning, as well as their needs in order to be supportive of their students.

Implications for School Counselors

The results of this study provide a greater understanding of the needs of high school seniors as they prepare to graduate from high school, as well as what might have been helpful to them over their high school career. The results of this survey are important for counselors working with high school students, as it allows them to learn first hand what counseling practices have been helpful to students as well as what may be lacking.

Prior to this school year, this particular high school had no formal comprehensive counseling program. The students surveyed in this project went through high school with minimal interaction with their counselor, unless the student sought out more help. Time constraints only allowed counselors to push into classrooms once a year for each grade level delivering the "important" information for each grade, but there was little follow through or in-depth discussions on post high school planning or self exploration. This study, along with the results of Gibbons et al (2006), shows the importance of comprehensive career education beginning early in a student's high school experience and given consistently throughout, not just once a year. The students in this study even suggested that counselors should be meeting with students at least four times a year to address the needs of each student. Information on careers and post secondary options, as well as exploration of academic and career interest and values need to start being presented in the ninth grade and consistently throughout high school, before these students and their parents eliminate options due to a lack of or inaccurate information.

Overall, students indicated that they would have benefited from more academic, career, social and emotional preparation for their plans post high school. In the author's experience,

many programs address the needs of students through high school as they prepare to make their post graduation plans, but there is little to no preparation for students once they have made their choice. Students have many resources they can use to obtain help in choosing their career path or college for the following fall, but once they have obtained a job or been accepted to a college they are left on their own to prepare for their life after high school. Some students in the study indicated feelings of uneasiness as they thought about their life after graduation, and this is the first time many students are leaving to live on their own, entering the work force, or attending college. The students indicated that they would have prepared themselves earlier socially and emotionally for the transition, and would have started becoming independent earlier. A comprehensive counseling program should also address the social and emotional needs of students after they have made their post high school plans; such as how to adjust to dorm life, an example college course syllabus, help with choosing the right classes in college, or how to get along with co-workers or roommates. Proactive counseling support should also be offered to address the students' feelings of anxiety related with the large transition they will be making.

School counselors are specialists in child and adolescent development, and they are the most qualified to help students meet the challenges and demands of the school system while they prepare to transition out of high school (ASCA, 2005). As shown in the results of this study, students rated them as least helpful with their post high school planning, but the majority of the students from this study indicated that they would have benefited from more help from their counselor. When the students worked with their counselors, they indicated to be pleased with the help they received but would have liked more of it. The low rating of their counselor's helpfulness may very well be related to their lack of availability, as students often indicated that their counselors were very busy and it was often hard for students to get one-on-one time with

them. In a study done by Blustein et al. (1997), students reported that having a large caseload was a major factor that kept their school counselor from substantially engaging with them. At the particular school where this study was completed, one counselor has a caseload of approximately 255 students. This counselor caseload is above the 250 student maximum that the American School Counselor Association recommends in order for a school counselor to be most effective and helpful to their students, and is above the National average among high schools of 220 students (ASCA, 2005). ASCA also states that in order to be most effective school counselors should spend at least 80% of their time in direct service to students, which is often difficult to do when managing the paperwork and other non-counseling duties associated with a large caseload of diverse students. General information can be distributed to all students through group psycho-educational lessons, but with each student comes different circumstances that need to be addressed. Although a comprehensive school counseling program will help to address the overall needs of all students, it is important for school counselors to advocate for themselves; educate students, parents, faculty and staff of their position and what they are capable of in order to better serve each *individual* student's needs.

The results from this study, as well as from Gibbons et al (2006), emphasize the importance of involving and educating parents early on in this career decision making process. Those students attending a four year college rated parents as more helpful than those students attending a two year college or not at all. This is not surprising given the "College for all" attitude in today's society; many of today's families think all students must go to college in order to be successful, which is not the case for everyone (Rosenbaum & Person, 2003). Since families are the number one resource used by students, it is important that they have the right tools and resources to help their students make a post high school choice that is a right fit.

School counselors need to address the needs of parents as well as students through increased communication with families and educational programs for parents.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess the needs of students in order to create a comprehensive school counseling program to help them successfully transition out of high school. This study also examined whether there was a difference in the needs of students dependent on their plans for post-graduation: going on to a four year college, a community college or for those that were not college bound. Results of this survey show that there is a difference between the needs of students dependent on their plans after graduation, but regardless of their choice *all* students reported needing more support and help with preparing for their transition out of high school. It is clear that minimal interaction with students and a reactive-based counseling program is not sufficient to meet the needs of today's students. In the future, the results of this survey should be used in conjunction with the ASCA National Model to identify the school's specific standards that need to be addressed. Combined with the research on career development theories, college and career decision making needs of students and the national trends on college admissions and the workplace, this study supports that a comprehensive school counseling program for grades 9 through 12 is the most effective way for school counselors in the high school setting to be proactive in addressing the academic, social/emotional and career development needs of students; and assuring that all students transition out of high school successfully.

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Appendix A

ASCA National Standards for Students

(COMPETENCIES AND INDICATORS)

Legend: A:A-1.1 = Academic Domain, Standard A, Competency 1 and Indicator 1

Academic Development

ASCA National Standards for academic development guide school counseling programs to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn.

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

A:A1 Improve Academic Self-concept

- A:A1.1 Articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners
- A:A1.2 Display a positive interest in learning
- A:A1.3 Take pride in work and achievement
- A:A1.4 Accept mistakes as essential to the learning process
- A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning

A:A2 Acquire Skills for Improving Learning

- A:A2.1 Apply time-management and task-management skills
- A:A2.2 Demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning
- A:A2.3 Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed
- A:A2.4 Apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance

A:A3 Achieve School Success

- A:A3.1 Take responsibility for their actions
- A:A3.2 Demonstrate the ability to work independently, as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other students
- A:A3.3 Develop a broad range of interests and abilities
- A:A3.4 Demonstrate dependability, productivity and initiative
- A:A3.5 Share knowledge

Standard B: Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.

A:B1 Improve Learning

- A:B1.1 Demonstrate the motivation to achieve individual potential
- A:B1.2 Learn and apply critical-thinking skills
- A:B1.3 Apply the study skills necessary for academic success at each level
- A:B1.4 Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family and peers
- A:B1.5 Organize and apply academic information from a variety of sources
- A:B1.6 Use knowledge of learning styles to positively influence school performance
- A:B1.7 Become a self-directed and independent learner

A:B2 Plan to Achieve Goals

- A:B2.1 Establish challenging academic goals in elementary, middle/jr. high and high school
- A:B2.2 Use assessment results in educational planning
- A:B2.3 Develop and implement annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement
- A:B2.4 Apply knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting
- A:B2.5 Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to assess progress toward educational goals
- A:B2.6 Understand the relationship between classroom performance and success in school
- A:B2.7 Identify post-secondary options consistent with interests, achievement, aptitude and abilities

STANDARD C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

A:C1 Relate School to Life Experiences

- A:C1.1 Demonstrate the ability to balance school, studies, extracurricular activities, leisure time and family life
- A:C1.2 Seek co-curricular and community experiences to enhance the school experience
- A:C1.3 Understand the relationship between learning and work

A:C1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the value of lifelong learning as essential to seeking, obtaining and maintaining life goals
A:C1.5 Understand that school success is the preparation to make the transition from student to community member
A:C1.6 Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and vocational opportunities

Career Development

ASCA National Standards for career development guide school counseling programs to provide the foundation for the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge that enable students to make a successful transition from school to the world of work, and from job to job across the life span.

Standard A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

C:A1 Develop Career Awareness

C:A1.1 Develop skills to locate, evaluate and interpret career information
C:A1.2 Learn about the variety of traditional and nontraditional occupations
C:A1.3. Develop an awareness of personal abilities, skills, interests and motivations
C:A1.4 Learn how to interact and work cooperatively in teams
C:A1.5 Learn to make decisions
C:A1.6 Learn how to set goals
C:A1.7 Understand the importance of planning
C:A1.8 Pursue and develop competency in areas of interest
C:A1.9 Develop hobbies and vocational interests
C:A1.10 Balance between work and leisure time

C:A2 Develop Employment Readiness

C:A2.1 Acquire employability skills such as working on a team, problem-solving and organizational skills
C:A2.2 Apply job readiness skills to seek employment opportunities
C:A2.3 Demonstrate knowledge about the changing workplace
C:A2.4 Learn about the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees
C:A2.5 Learn to respect individual uniqueness in the workplace
C:A2.6 Learn how to write a résumé
C:A2.7 Develop a positive attitude toward work and learning
C:A2.8 Understand the importance of responsibility, dependability, punctuality, integrity and effort in the workplace
C:A2.9 Utilize time- and task-management skills

Standard B: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.

C:B1 Acquire Career Information

- C:B1.1 Apply decision-making skills to career planning, course selection and career transition
- C:B1.2 Identify personal skills, interests and abilities and relate them to current career choice
- C:B1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of the career-planning process
- C:B1.4 Know the various ways in which occupations can be classified
- C:B1.5 Use research and information resources to obtain career information
- C:B1.6 Learn to use the Internet to access career-planning information
- C:B1.7 Describe traditional and nontraditional career choices and how they relate to career choice
- C:B1.8 Understand how changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future training

C:B2 Identify Career Goals

- C:B2.1 Demonstrate awareness of the education and training needed to achieve career goals
- C:B2.2 Assess and modify their educational plan to support career
- C:B2.3 Use employability and job readiness skills in internship, mentoring, shadowing and/or other work experience
- C:B2.4 Select course work that is related to career interests
- C:B2.5 Maintain a career-planning portfolio

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.

C:C1 Acquire Knowledge to Achieve Career Goals

- C:C1.1 Understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success
- C:C1.2 Explain how work can help to achieve personal success and satisfaction
- C:C1.3 Identify personal preferences and interests influencing career choice and success
- C:C1.4 Understand that the changing workplace requires lifelong learning and acquiring new skills
- C:C1.5 Describe the effect of work on lifestyle
- C:C1.6 Understand the importance of equity and access in career choice
- C:C1.7 Understand that work is an important and satisfying means of personal expression

C:C2 Apply Skills to Achieve Career Goals

- C:C2.1 Demonstrate how interests, abilities and achievement relate to achieving personal, social, educational and career goals
- C:C2.2 Learn how to use conflict management skills with peers and adults
- C:C2.3 Learn to work cooperatively with others as a team member
- C:C2.4 Apply academic and employment readiness skills in work-based learning situations such as internships, shadowing and/or mentoring experiences

Personal/Social Development

ASCA National Standards for personal/social development guide school counseling programs to provide the foundation for personal and social growth as students progress through school and into adulthood.

Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge

- PS:A1.1 Develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person
- PS:A1.2 Identify values, attitudes and beliefs
- PS:A1.3 Learn the goal-setting process
- PS:A1.4 Understand change is a part of growth
- PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings
- PS:A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior
- PS:A1.7 Recognize personal boundaries, rights and privacy needs
- PS:A1.8 Understand the need for self-control and how to practice it
- PS:A1.9 Demonstrate cooperative behavior in groups
- PS:A1.10 Identify personal strengths and assets
- PS:A1.11 Identify and discuss changing personal and social roles
- PS:A1.12 Identify and recognize changing family roles

PS:A2 Acquire Interpersonal Skills

- PS:A2.1 Recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities
- PS:A2.2 Respect alternative points of view
- PS:A2.3 Recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual differences
- PS:A2.4 Recognize, accept and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity
- PS:A2.5 Recognize and respect differences in various family configurations
- PS:A2.6 Use effective communications skills
- PS:A2.7 Know that communication involves speaking, listening and nonverbal behavior
- PS:A2.8 Learn how to make and keep friends

Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.

PS:B1 Self-knowledge Application

PS:B1.1	Use a decision-making and problem-solving model
PS:B1.2	Understand consequences of decisions and choices
PS:B1.3	Identify alternative solutions to a problem
PS:B1.4	Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems
PS:B1.5	Demonstrate when, where and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions
PS:B1.6	Know how to apply conflict resolution skills
PS:B1.7	Demonstrate a respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences
PS:B1.8	Know when peer pressure is influencing a decision
PS:B1.9	Identify long- and short-term goals
PS:B1.10	Identify alternative ways of achieving goals
PS:B1.11	Use persistence and perseverance in acquiring knowledge and skills
PS:B1.12	Develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

PS:C1 Acquire Personal Safety Skills

PS:C1.1	Demonstrate knowledge of personal information (i.e., telephone number, home address, emergency contact)
PS:C1.2	Learn about the relationship between rules, laws, safety and the protection of rights of the individual
PS:C1.3	Learn about the differences between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact
PS:C1.4	Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy
PS:C1.5	Differentiate between situations requiring peer support and situations requiring adult professional help
PS:C1.6	Identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help
PS:C1.7	Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices
PS:C1.8	Learn about the emotional and physical dangers of substance use and abuse
PS:C1.9	Learn how to cope with peer pressure
PS:C1.10	Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict
PS:C1.11	Learn coping skills for managing life events

Appendix B

1. General Information

1. What are your plans after graduation?

- ◯ Attend a community college
- ◯ Attend a 4 year college/university
- ◯ Full time employment
- ◯ Trade School
- ◯ Military
- ◯ Other (please specify)

2. What have you done/what resources have you used to prepare for your plans after high school?

- ☐ Talked with family
- ☐ Researched information about a career (internet, CareerNet.com, "Explore Careers" on Naviance etc.)
- ☐ Talked with someone in my career of interest
- ☐ Looked at college websites
- ☐ Participated in job shadowing, internship, or a co-op
- ☐ Taken a personality type inventory (ex: "My Personality Type" on Naviance)
- ☐ Taken a career interest inventory (ex: "Explore Interests" on Naviance)
- ☐ Visited a college/trade school/military base
- ☐ Talked with my school counselor
- ☐ Worked/volunteered in my career of interest or area related to it
- ☐ Written a resume
- ☐ Taken AP/dual credit courses
- ☐ Used Naviance in general

3. Who/what has been most helpful with your post high school plans?

	Not at all helpful	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Extremely Helpful
Parents/family	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teachers	◯	◯	◯	◯
Friends	◯	◯	◯	◯
School Counselor	◯	◯	◯	◯
Books	◯	◯	◯	◯
Newspaper/TV/Radio	◯	◯	◯	◯
Internet/websites	◯	◯	◯	◯
College brochures/visits	◯	◯	◯	◯
Work/internship/co-op experience	◯	◯	◯	◯

4. Looking back at your years at Schroeder, what would have been helpful to better prepare you for your post high school plans?

	Not at all helpful	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Extremely Helpful
More parental/guardian input	○	○	○	○
Assistance finding & applying for a job	○	○	○	○
Taking career interest inventories/personality profiles etc	○	○	○	○
Information on different careers	○	○	○	○
More time with your school counselor	○	○	○	○
Exposure to or experience in different careers (ex: job shadowing, internships, etc.)	○	○	○	○
Resume writing tips	○	○	○	○
Take more college prep/college credit courses in high school (ex: AP's, dual credit tech and business courses)	○	○	○	○
Taken an EMCC course (ex: cosmetology, culinary, auto mechanics, New Visions, etc.)	○	○	○	○
Study harder/better GPA	○	○	○	○
Get involved in more clubs/activities at school	○	○	○	○
Get an early start on the college search and application process	○	○	○	○

2. Academics

5. How important was it for you to do well in school?

- ◯ Not at all important
- ◯ Somewhat important
- ◯ Important
- ◯ Extremely Important

6. How important was it to your parents/guardians that you do well in school?

- ◯ Not at all important
- ◯ Somewhat important
- ◯ Important
- ◯ Extremely important

7. Please indicate the range of your current GPA:

- ◯ 100-95
- ◯ 94-90
- ◯ 89-85
- ◯ 84-80
- ◯ 79-75
- ◯ 74-70
- ◯ 69-65
- ◯ 64 or below

8. How would you rate your effort level in regards to achieving your GPA?

- ◯ Didn't try much at all
- ◯ Did enough work to get by
- ◯ Worked hard, but there's always room for improvement
- ◯ Could not have possibly tried harder

3. Choices, Choices, Choices

9. If planning to attend community or a 4 year college in the fall, what are the reasons you want to go to college? (Please check all that apply)

- [ ] Need degree for the job you want to pursue
- [ ] To get more money or a better paying job
- [ ] Enjoy learning
- [ ] Parent/Guardian's influence
- [ ] Friend's influence
- [ ] Want to further explore different career options
- [ ] Do not want to get a full time job just yet
- [ ] Not planning to attend college
- [ ] Other (please specify) _____

10. Please indicate the general geographic area of colleges you applied to:

- ◯ Throughout Rochester (within 50 miles)
- ◯ Western New York
- ◯ New York State
- ◯ East Coast
- ◯ South
- ◯ West
- ◯ All over the USA
- ◯ International
- ◯ Did not apply to any colleges or universities

11. How many colleges/universities did you apply to?

- ◯ 1-3
- ◯ 4-6
- ◯ 7-9
- ◯ 10-12
- ◯ 13+
- ◯ Did not apply to any college or universities

12. How many of the colleges/universities did you get accepted to?

- ◯ 1-3
- ◯ 4-6
- ◯ 7-9
- ◯ 10-12
- ◯ 13+
- ◯ Did not apply to any colleges or universities

13. Do you feel anything constrained your college search? Even if you did not apply to any colleges, do you feel there were there any factors that stopped you from applying? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Cost/lack of finances available
- ☐ Academics (GPA, SAT/ACT scores)
- ☐ Lack of information/knowledge about college
- ☐ Not prepared enough/lack of confidence
- ☐ Family responsibilities
- ☐ Lack of support at home/from family
- ☐ Lack of support at school (from teachers, school counselors, principals etc.)
- ☐ I don't feel anything constrained my college search

14. Please rate the following factors by importance in choosing the college/trade school/military option/job etc. in your plans for next year:

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important
Location	◯	◯	◯	◯
Size of school/military base/company	◯	◯	◯	◯
Family preference (where they wanted you to go, where they attended school or worked etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Friend preference (where friends are going, where previous students went)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Academic strength/quality of programs available	◯	◯	◯	◯
Employment opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯
Cost	◯	◯	◯	◯
Financial aid/scholarships available	◯	◯	◯	◯
Did not get into the college of my choice	◯	◯	◯	◯

4. Other Preparation

15. Did your parents/guardians want you to attend college?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ They had no opinion

16. Does your family agree with your choices for next year?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Had no opinion

17. Did you take the SAT and/or ACT?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

18. Did you take the appropriate practice exam(s)? (PSAT and/or PLAN)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

19. If yes, did you find the practice exams helpful in studying/preparing for the SAT and/or ACT?

- ◯ Not at all helpful
- ◯ Somewhat helpful
- ◯ Helpful
- ◯ Extremely Helpful
- ◯ Did not take the PSAT/PLAN

5. Career

20. Do you know what career/general area of study you would like to eventually pursue?

- ◯ Unsure at this time
- ◯ There are a couple of things I would like to explore
- ◯ Have a pretty good idea
- ◯ Know exactly what I want to do

If you have any idea(s), please share it below:

21. What is the education level required for your career(s) of interest?

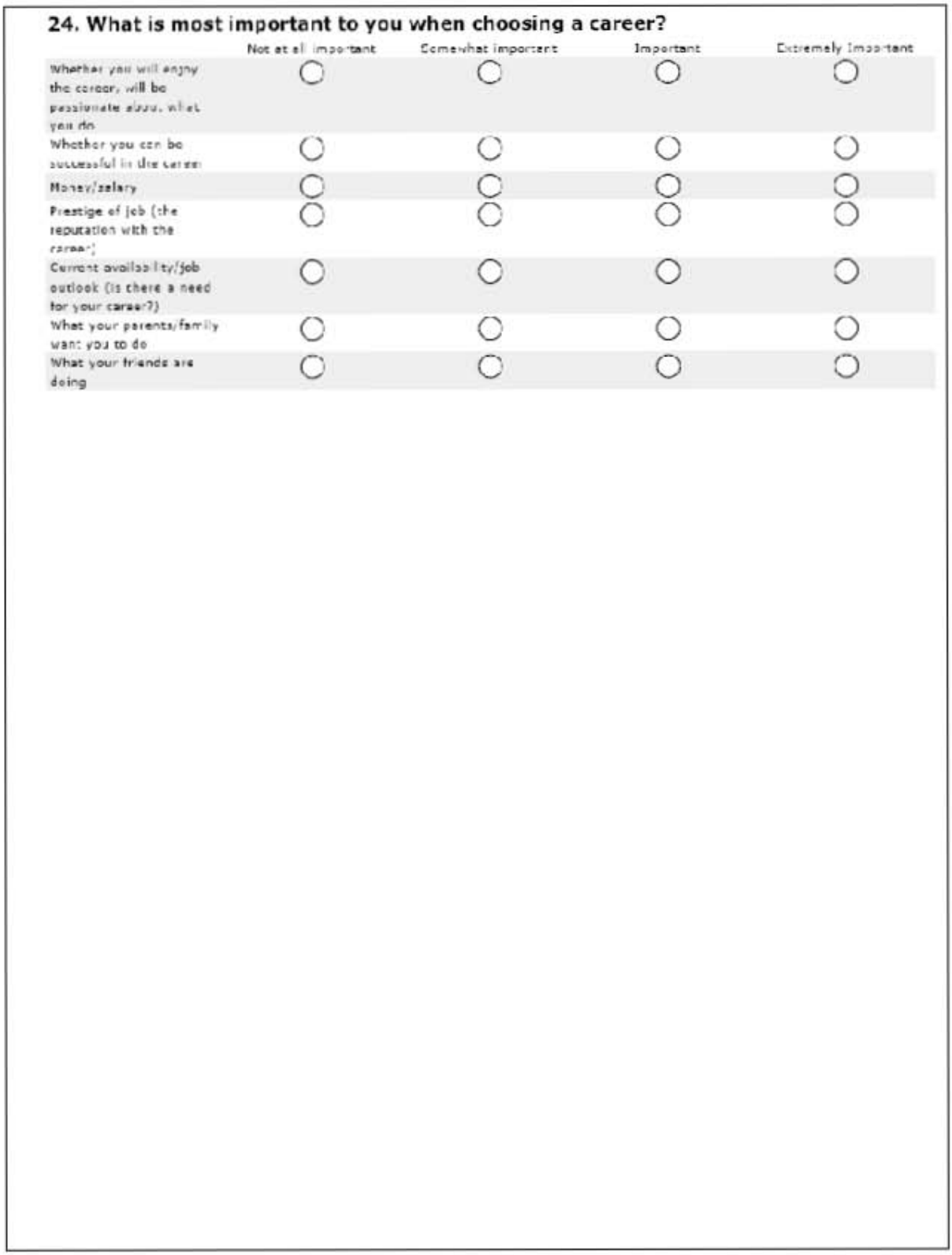
- ◯ Trade school, 2 years associate's degree or specialized job training/certification
- ◯ A 4 year bachelor's degree
- ◯ Master's degree or higher
- ◯ Education level unclear

22. How long have you been interested in your chosen career/area of study?

- ◯ 2 years or more
- ◯ 12-24 months
- ◯ 3-12 months
- ◯ Less than 3 months

23. What is the main way you learned about this career? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Television, radio, newspaper or other media
- ☐ Parents/family members
- ☐ Classes
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Teachers
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ School counselor
- ☐ Real life experience (job, internship, job shadow, co-op etc.)



24. What is most important to you when choosing a career?

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important
Whether you will enjoy the career, will be passionate about what you do	○	○	○	○
Whether you can be successful in the career	○	○	○	○
Money/salary	○	○	○	○
Prestige of job (the reputation with the career)	○	○	○	○
Current availability/job outlook (is there a need for your career?)	○	○	○	○
What your parents/family want you to do	○	○	○	○
What your friends are doing	○	○	○	○

6. Last But Not Least...

25. Do you feel your academic experience at Schroeder has prepared you for your post high school plans?

- ◯ Not at all
- ◯ Somewhat
- ◯ I feel adequately prepared
- ◯ I couldn't feel more prepared

26. Do you feel emotionally/socially prepared for post high school plans?

- ◯ Not at all prepared
- ◯ Somewhat prepared
- ◯ There are a few things I might be nervous about, but generally I feel prepared
- ◯ I'm very confident that I am prepared for the next step

27. Next year I plan to:

- ◯ Live at home
- ◯ Live on my own or with roommates in housing provided by college, trade school, military, job (dorms, townhouses, military base etc.)
- ◯ Live on my own or with roommates in housing NOT provided by college, trade school, military, job (house, apartment, townhouse etc.)
- ◯ Other (please specify) _____

28. What are some activities you might have liked to have experienced or general areas of knowledge you would have liked more information on to better prepare for your post high school plans? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Academic preparation (ex: what college/trade school classes will be like, typical class schedule, go over a course syllabus, etc.)
- ☐ Career preparation (ex: how to apply for a job, help with resume writing, making the right career choice, etc.)
- ☐ Social/emotional preparation (ex: what dorm/apartment life is like, how to budget finances, talking about living with roommates, time management skills, etc.)
- ☐ I don't think any of the above would have been helpful

29. Please tell us anything you might have done differently to better prepare yourself for your transition out of high school:

30. Please tell us anything your counselor could have done or you would have liked more of to better help you prepare for your transition out of high school:

31. Please let us know any general advice you would give to underclassmen as they prepare for their transition out of high school:

Appendix C

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR STUDENTS

The purpose of this research project is to examine 12th grade student's academic, social/emotional and career needs as they transition out of high school. This survey is designed to assist with the understanding of those needs in order to help better prepare other students through a career and college education program. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey about your high school experience and your post high school plans. Data will be collected through Survey Monkey on the Internet. There will be no identifying information on your survey and there would be no way to identify your responses. This research project is also being conducted in order for me to complete my masters' thesis for the Department of Counselor Education at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Being in it, or refusing to be in it, will not affect your grades or class standing. You are free to change your mind or stop being in the study at any time.

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions. I will have a chance to discuss any questions I have about the study with the researcher after completing the questionnaire.
2. My confidentiality is guaranteed. My name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect me to the written survey. If any publication results from this research, I would not be identified by name. Results will be given anonymously and in group form only, so that neither the participants nor their schools can be identified.
3. There will be no anticipated personal risks or benefits because of participation in this project.
4. My participation involves reading an online survey of 31 questions and answering those questions online. It is estimated that it will take 15 minutes to complete the survey.
5. Approximately 380 people will take part in this study. The results will be used for the completion of a research project by the primary researcher.
6. Data and consent forms will be kept separately in a locked filing cabinet by the investigator and will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been completed

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the study realizing I may withdraw without penalty at any time during the survey process.
Please sign the form in the space provided.
Please complete the survey and return this consent form to your social studies teacher.

If you have any questions you may contact:

Primary Researcher: Courtney Cannan, 670-5263
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Thomas Hernandez, 395-2258
SUNY College at Brockport: Department of Counselor Education

_____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Name Printed

Appendix D

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS

The purpose of this research project is to examine 12th grade student's academic, social/emotional and career needs as they transition out of high school. This survey is designed to assist with the understanding of those needs in order to help better prepare other students through a career and college education program. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey about your high school experience and your post high school plans. Data will be collected through Survey Monkey on the Internet. There will be no identifying information on your survey and there would be no way to identify your responses. This research project is also being conducted in order for me to complete my masters' thesis for the Department of Counselor Education at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Being in it, or refusing to be in it, will not affect your grades or class standing. You are free to change your mind or stop being in the study at any time.
I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions. I will have a chance to discuss any questions I have about the study with the researcher after completing the questionnaire.
2. My confidentiality is guaranteed. My name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect me to the written survey. If any publication results from this research, I would not be identified by name. Results will be given anonymously and in group form only, so that neither the participants nor their schools can be identified.
3. There will be no anticipated personal risks or benefits because of participation in this project.
4. My participation involves reading an online survey of 31 questions and answering those questions online. It is estimated that it will take 15 minutes to complete the survey.
5. Approximately 380 people will take part in this study. The results will be used for the completion of a research project by the primary researcher.
6. Data and consent forms will be kept separately in a locked filing cabinet by the investigator and will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been completed

You are being asked whether or not you want to participate in this study. If you wish to participate, and you agree with the statement below, please sign in the space provided. Remember, you may change your mind at any point and withdraw from the study. You can refuse to participate even if your parent/guardian gives permission for you to participate.
Please complete the survey and return this consent form, along with the parent consent form to your social studies teacher.

If you have any questions you may contact:
Primary Researcher: Courtney Cannan, 670-5263
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Thomas Hernandez, 395-2258
SUNY College at Brockport: Department of Counselor Education

I understand the information provided in this form and agree to participate in this project.

_____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Birth date of participant

_____

Signature of a witness 18 years of age or older Date

Appendix E

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENTS

This form describes a research study being conducted with students about their academic, social/emotional and career needs as they transition out of high school. This purpose of this research is to understand the needs of high school students in relation to their post high school choices, in order to create a college and career counseling program. If you agree to have your child participate in this study, s/he will be asked to complete a survey about their high school experience and their post high school plans. Data will be collected through Survey Monkey on the Internet. There will be no identifying information on your child's survey and there would be no way to identify your child's responses. This research project is also being conducted in order for me to complete my masters' thesis for the Department of Counselor Education at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. Being in it, or refusing to be in it, will not affect your child's grades or class standing. S/he is free to change her/his mind or stop being in the study at any time.

I understand that:

1. My child's participation is voluntary and s/he has the right to refuse to answer any questions. S/he will have a chance to discuss any questions s/he has about the study with the researcher after completing the questionnaire.
2. My child's confidentiality is guaranteed. Her/his name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect my child to the written survey. If any publication results from this research, s/he would not be identified by name. Results will be given anonymously and in group form only, so that neither the participants nor their schools can be identified.
3. There will be no anticipated personal risks or benefits because of participation in this project.
4. My child's participation involves reading an online survey of 31 questions and answering those questions online. It is estimated that it will take 15 minutes to complete the survey.
5. Approximately 380 people will take part in this study. The results will be used for the completion of a research project by the primary researcher.
6. Data and consent forms will be kept separately in a locked filing cabinet by the investigator and will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been completed.

You are being asked whether or not you will permit your child to participate in this study. If you wish to give permission to participate, and you agree with the statement below, please sign in the space provided. Remember, you may change your mind at any point and withdraw from the study. Your child can refuse to participate even if you have given permission for her/him to participate.

I understand the information provided in this form and agree to allow my child to participate as a participant in this project. I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my child's participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction.

If you have any questions you may contact:
Primary Researcher: Courtney Cannan, 670-5263
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Thomas Hernandez, 395-2258
SUNY College at Brockport: Department of Counselor Education

_____

Signature of Parent Date

Child's name:_____