



## K-12 Counseling Department Program Evaluation

Prepared by:  
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District Supervisor of School Counseling

June 10, 2016

## **Program Evaluation**

Program under evaluation: Counseling Department, K-12  
Date of last evaluation: 2008

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### **Committee Members**

The following counselors assisted in gathering data for this program evaluation:

- Aroldi, Carley
  - Buist, James
  - Cahill, Marguerite
  - Capozzi, Carrie
  - Cuccaro, Linda
  - Duque, Anne
  - Kamenir, Amy
  - Kunzman, Mary
  - Mahoney, Kathryn
  - Miscia, Cara
  - Muraview, Rebecca
  - Rauschenberger, Eric
  - Sweet, Kimberlee
  - Treanor, Jackie
  - Van Der Stad, Katherine
  - West, Andrew
  - Wu, Peggy
- 

### **Changes Since the Last Evaluation**

From 2008 through 2012, the Director of Curriculum supervised school counselors in the district. A Ridge High School Assistant Principal supervised the two Student Assistance Counselors (SACs) from Ridge and the one SAC from William Annin Middle School (WAMS). The Director of Special Services supervised the MAP Program and Coordinators at both Ridge and WAMS. At Ridge, the head counselor served as a liaison between the Director of Curriculum and the high school counselors.

Freshmen counselors were eliminated following the 2007-2008 school year, in favor of all counselors having caseloads consisting of grades 9 through 12.

In 2012, the head counselor position was cut, and students were divided among the other eight Ridge high school counselors. The position of District Supervisor of Guidance (K-12) was created and filled in July 2012. Supervision of K-12 counselors and SACs fell under this new district administrator.

The title of the department and its staff was changed from “Guidance” to “School Counseling” in 2013 to reflect current wording on New Jersey state certificates and licenses (Counseling Department, District Supervisor of School Counseling, School Counselors, etc.).

During the summer of 2014, a 9-12 counseling curriculum was formally established to document and memorialize the counseling modules that the department has used since the last program evaluation. It was linked to both the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for 21st Century Life and Careers, as well as the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards. A K-5 counseling curriculum was written in the summer of 2015. Counseling curriculum writing for grades 6-8 is planned for the summer of 2016.

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## Current Status

### Staffing:

There are 17 full-time school counselors in the district.

- Each of the four elementary schools has one counselor.
- WAMS has five counselors.
- Ridge has eight counselors.

There are three full-time SACs in the district.

- Ridge has two SACs.
- WAMS has one SAC.

All are directed and supervised by the District Supervisor of School Counseling.

### Program:

The counseling program interfaces with many aspects of the total school program, including but not limited to:

- Social and Emotional Counseling
  - Students are introduced to the counselor and his or her services at the earliest possible opportunity at the beginning of each school year. Counseling sessions are held with pupils as deemed appropriate by the counselor, administrators, teachers, parents, and/or pupils. Counselors also serve as a resource for parents who may need information about developmental stages or needs of their children, referral sources for in-depth family or individual counseling needs, and facilitation in communication with teachers or school staff.
- College and Career Counseling
  - Counselors play a vital role in this area and begin this aspect of guidance early in middle school. The focus intensifies in high school.
- Registration, Placement, and Orientation
  - Counselors assist with the registration process for new students and interpret test scores and other data, as needed.
- Scheduling
  - Middle and high school counselors assist students with course selection, and are responsible for maintaining an accurate school schedule for students on their caseload.
- Standardized Testing
  - Elementary school counselors are the site administrators for standardized tests. They coordinate with the district test administrator, implement and interpret the coordinated program of standardized testing, assist pupils and parents with the evaluation of student aptitudes and abilities, and assist with the identification of students eligible to receive additional services based on need and ability. Middle school counselors assist their school-level site administrator with the implementation of standardized testing.
- Collaboration with Professionals
  - School counselors collaborate with the Office of Special Services to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities. The counselor also acts as a liaison between the administration, teachers, parents, and students to promote clear understanding and to unify all efforts in the best interest of the students.
- Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)/504 Committee
  - The counselors are integral members of the I&RS/504 committees. At the elementary level, they chair the committees and assist with the development, implementation, and monitoring of Action

Plans and/or 504s to meet the needs of at-risk students. At the middle and high schools, the counselors gather the information to be presented to the committee for their students.

- Curriculum & Modules
  - The elementary counselors develop and implement lessons on the identification and expression of feelings, self-esteem, appreciation of self and of others, conflict resolution, responsible decision making and transitioning to adulthood. Middle school counselors help children to become better students and to navigate the various challenges associated with puberty and the pre-teenage years. At the high school, the focus of the modules is mainly on academic post-secondary planning.
  - The Counseling curriculum can be downloaded from [Rubicon](#). Though there can be some variation, modules are presented annually to each grade:

*Counseling Department Module/Programming Timeline*

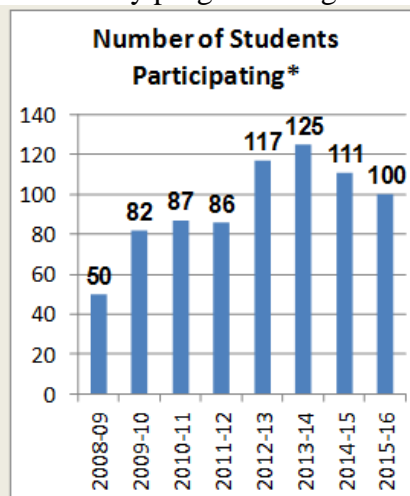
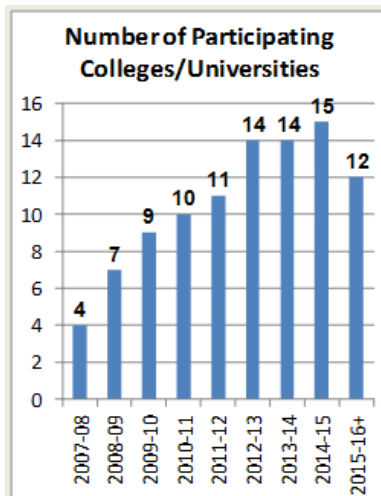
	Grade(s)						
	K	1-5	6-8	9	10	11	12
<b>September</b>	Intro/One of a Kind; Rainbow of Feelings	Intro/One of a Kind	Transitions/Fall Orientation	Freshmen Orientation; Learning Styles Inventory			Senior Mechanics
<b>October</b>	Anti-Bullying; Rainbow of Feelings	Anti-Bullying					
<b>November</b>	Choosing Chums; Rainbow of Feelings	Choosing Chums				Navigating the College Application Process	
<b>December</b>	Empathy; Rainbow of Feelings	Empathy					
<b>January</b>	Handling Conflict; Rainbow of Feelings	Handling Conflict	Mid-year “Tune-up”		Career Module*	Naviance Training	Mid-year Naviance Update
<b>February</b>	Anti-Stress; Rainbow of Feelings	Anti-Stress	Scheduling	Scheduling	Scheduling	Scheduling	
<b>March</b>			Scheduling			Junior Conferences	
<b>April</b>						Junior Conferences	
<b>May</b>							Naviance Update
<b>June</b>	Moving On; Rainbow of Feelings	Moving On	Transitions				

\*Prior to 2016, the Sophomore Career Module was presented to 10th graders in late April/early May. It was moved to January due to scheduling uncertainties surrounding PARCC testing.

## Follow-Up on 2008 Recommendations for Improvement

The following progress has been made on the recommendations for improvement that were made in the last K-12 Counseling Program Evaluation in 2008:

- *Post curriculum guides for guidance modules at each grade level on the website.*
  - Counseling Curriculum was written and linked to ASCA and New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards in 2014 (grades 9-12) and 2015 (grades K-5). The curriculum is posted on Rubicon, a link to which is provided on the Counseling Department website. Curriculum writing for grades 6-8 is planned for the summer of 2016.
- *Hire a head counselor at the high school and middle school to provide leadership, to serve as a liaison between counselors and administrators, and to add cohesion to the program.*
  - The head counselor position was created, and then eliminated in favor of a supervisory counseling position (see “Changes Since the Last Evaluation,” above).
- *Investigate ways to inform the parents, community, teachers, and students of the role of counselors and ways in which they serve the students of Bernards Township.*
  - Improvements in technology have allowed the Counseling Department to “spread the word” about our services quickly and efficiently. We have utilized Friday Folders, Naviance Blasts, and our websites to inform parents and students about the counselors’ roles and services.
- *Increase attention to career planning and post-secondary transition that extends beyond college planning.*
  - The Ridge Sophomore Career Module was rewritten in 2010. In 2014, freshmen were also given access to Naviance so that they could begin exploring post-secondary planning options earlier. Naviance in and of itself has evolved over the years to become a much more comprehensive planning tool for college and career than it was in 2008.
  - A stipended Military Liaison position was created in 2013 to assist students with post-secondary pursuits surrounding enlistment, military school, and ROTC.
- *Eliminate the position of 9<sup>th</sup> grade counselor and assign all guidance staff a 9-12 caseload*
  - Freshmen counselors were eliminated at the end of the 2007-2008 school year in favor of all counselors having a 9-12 caseload.
- *Support move to online based transcript submission program which is supported by the Family Connection system.*
  - The Ridge Counseling Department began using Naviance eDocs to submit transcripts online in 2010-2011.
- *Increase the number of on-site college “instant decision” days offered to seniors.*
  - The Instant Decision/Interview Day program has grown tremendously since 2008:



\*In 2015-16, Two colleges canceled their participation due to scheduling conflicts on their end  
 \*Students have been double-counted if they participated in more than one IDD in a given year

## Comparison to Other Districts

During the last program evaluation, Bernards Township schools were compared to other districts in our same District Factor Group (DFG), which was “J.” In 2012-2013, the New Jersey Department of Education eliminated DFG categories and replaced them with “Peer Group” schools that change from year to year on a school’s Performance Report. Since this change, Bernards Township has unofficially compared ourselves to nine other districts, formerly of DFG J, with the highest overall test scores and GPAs: Glen Rock Borough, Haddonfield Borough, Millburn Township, Montgomery Township, Mountain Lakes Borough, Northern Highlands Regional, Ridgewood Village, School District of the Chathams, and West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional.

Unless otherwise noted, the following comparisons were completed using data from the New Jersey Performance Reports that were published in May 2016.

### District-Level Counseling Information

District	County	Population Served	Counseling Administration <sup>†</sup>	Counseling Curriculum?
Bernards Twp.	Somerset	K-12	Supervisor of School Counseling, K-12	Yes, K-5, 9-12
Glen Rock Borough	Bergen	K-12	Director of Student Personnel Services, K-12	No
Haddonfield Borough	Camden	K-12	Dean of Student Life/Supervisor of Counseling Services, 9-12	No
Millburn Twp.	Essex	K-12	Head Counselor (non-Administrative), 9-12	No
Montgomery Twp.	Somerset	K-12	Director of Student Academic and Counseling Services, 9-12	Yes, K-8
Mountain Lakes Borough	Morris	K-12	Director of Guidance, 9-12	No
Northern Highlands Regional	Bergen	9-12	Supervisor of School Counseling, 9-12	No
Ridgewood Village	Bergen	K-12	Assistant Principal, 9-12	Yes, 6-12
School District of the Chathams	Morris	K-12	N/A	No
West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional	Mercer	K-12	Director of Guidance, K-12	Yes, K-12

<sup>†</sup>Data from District/School websites

## School-Level Counseling Information

District	School	Level	# of Students	# of School Counselors <sup>+</sup>	Ratio	# of SACs <sup>+</sup>
Bernards Twp.	Ridge High	9-12	1,889	8	1:236	2
	William Annin Middle	6-8	1,382	5	1:276	1
	Cedar Hill Elementary	K-5	610	1	1:610	0
	Liberty Corner Elementary	PreK-5	556	1	1:556	0
	Mount Prospect Elementary	PreK-5	687	1	1:687	0
	Oak Street Elementary	K-5	579	1	1:579	0
Glen Rock Boro	Glen Rock High	9-12	746	4	1:187	1
	Glen Rock Middle	6-8	578	3	1:193	0
	Alexander Hamilton Elementary	K-5	257	0.5	1:514	0
	Central Elementary	K-5	291	0.5	1:582	0
	Clara E. Coleman Elementary	K-5	271	0.5	1:542	0
	Richard E. Byrd Elementary	K-5	245	0.5	1:490	0
Haddonfield Twp.	Haddonfield Memorial High	9-12	776	5	1:155	1
	Haddonfield Middle	6-8	618	3	1:206	
	Central Elementary	PreK-5	404	1	1:404	
	Elizabeth Haddon Elementary	PreK-5	340	1	1:340	
	J. Fithian Tatem Elementary	PreK-5	455	1	1:455	
Millburn Twp.	Millburn High	9-12	1,472	7	1:210	1
	Millburn Middle	6-8	1,121	3	1:374	0
	Deerfield Elementary	K-5	560	0	N/A	0
	Glenwood Elementary	K-5	477	0	N/A	0
	Hartshorn Elementary	K-5	539	0	N/A	0
	South Mountain Elementary	PreK-5	348	0	N/A	0
	Wyoming Elementary	K-5	352	0	N/A	0
Montgomery Twp.	Montgomery High	9-12	1,712	7	1:245	1
	Montgomery Upper Middle	7-8	820	2	1:410	0
	Montgomery Lower Middle	5-6	747	2	1:374	0
	Village Elementary	3-4	648	2	1:324	0
	Orchard Hill Elementary	PreK-2	824	2	1:412	0
Mountain Lakes Boro	Mountain Lakes High	9-12	690	4	1:173	
	Briarcliff Middle	6-8	312	1	1:312	0
	Wildwood Elementary	PreK-5	453	1	1:453	0
Northern Highlands Regional	Northern Highlands Regional High	9-12	1,372	6	1:229	1
Ridgewood Village	Ridgewood High	9-12	1,714	8	1:214	0
	Benjamin Franklin Middle	6-8	737	3	1:246	
	George Washington Middle	6-8	650	2	1:325	
	Hawes Elementary	K-5	412	0	0	
	Orchard Elementary	K-5	312	0	0	
	Ridge Elementary	K-5	485	0	0	
	Somerville Elementary	K-5	457	0	0	
	Travell Elementary	K-5	378	0	0	
Willard Elementary	K-5	497	0	0		

District	School	Level	# of Students	# of School Counselors <sup>†</sup>	Ratio	# of SACs <sup>‡</sup>
School District of the Chathams	Chatham High	9-12	1,189	6	1:198	1
	Chatham Middle	6-8	991	3	1:330	1
	Lafayette Elementary	4-5	680	1	1:680	0
	Milton Avenue Elementary	PreK-3	363	1	1:363	0
	Southern Boulevard Elementary	K-3	455	1	1:455	0
	Washington Avenue Elementary	PreK-3	432	1	1:432	0
West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional	West Windsor-Plainsboro High North	9-12	1,485	7	1:212	1
	West Windsor-Plainsboro High South	9-12	1,600	7	1:229	1
	Community Middle	6-8	1,136	3	1:379	0.5
	Thomas R. Grover Middle	6-8	1,161	3	1:387	0.5
	Dutch Neck Elementary	K-3	672	1	1:672	0
	John V. B. Wicoff Elementary	PreK-3	462	1	1:462	0
	Maurice Hawk Elementary	K-3	790	1	1:790	0
	Millstone River Elementary	4-5	875	2	1:438	0
	Town Center Elementary	PreK-3	732	1	1:732	0
	Village Elementary	4-5	714	1	1:714	0

<sup>†</sup>Data from District/School websites, 2014-2015

<sup>‡</sup>Two crisis intervention counselors serve the district

### Additional Post-Secondary Counseling Information

District	School	Specialized College & Career Counselor?	Use Social Media?
Bernards Twp.	Ridge High	No	No
Glen Rock Boro	Glen Rock High	No	Yes
Haddonfield Twp.	Haddonfield Memorial High	No	Yes
Millburn Twp.	Millburn High	No	No
Montgomery Twp.	Montgomery High	No	Yes
Mountain Lakes Boro	Mountain Lakes High	Yes, beginning in 2016-17	Yes
Northern Highlands Regional	Northern Highlands Regional High	No	Yes
Ridgewood Village	Ridgewood High	No	Yes
School District of the Chathams	Chatham High	Yes	Yes
West Windsor- Plainsboro Regional	West Windsor-Plainsboro High North	No	No
	West Windsor-Plainsboro High South	No	No



## Research & Recommendations from District Counselors

In 2013-2014, as this program evaluation was being initiated, the Bernards Township School District counselors developed a list of programming and procedural questions, and interviewed Directors/Supervisors/Counselors from our comparison districts. The following districts voluntarily participated in some or all of the grade-level interviews: Glen Rock, Haddonfield, Millburn, Montgomery, Mountain Lakes, Northern Highlands, Ridgewood Village, School District of the Chathams, and West Windsor-Plainsboro. Based on the information gathered, the counselors made the following recommendations:

### *Ridge High School Counselor Recommendations*

- Explore a way for the Peer Leaders to take a more active role in 9<sup>th</sup> grade orientation/transition (e.g. study skills groups)
- Continue with expanding on career module; possibly include a career day/fair at the high school. Consider using an alternate career assessments (ASVAB). Explore the possibility of a career fair or having monthly guest speakers. Perhaps a career component could be included in the college fair. Explore the possibility of utilizing business education students to create a “Career of the Month” bulletin board or collaborating with a business education course.
- Plan for separate night on standardized testing, primarily for sophomore parents (started in 2014).
  - Consider bringing in an outside speaker for standardized testing night (enacted in 2014; decided to keep it in-house for 2015).
- Possibly distribute information about the ACT when we present PSAT information. Should we explore a way to offer the PLAN or a practice ACT? Recommendations supported by data that indicates students are taking the ACT more and more. Explore ways for Ridge High School to become an ACT test site.
- Consider coordination of IEP meetings, junior conferences, and scheduling given the increase in caseload and demands on the counselors.
- For Senior Mechanics program, consider having the presentation for parents in June.
- For Scholarships: recommendation is to ask students who self-nominate (when there is a run-off) to come in and speak about themselves to the scholarship committee rather than to merely rely upon counselor feedback and resume.
- Seek funding for outside speakers from PTO.
- All comparison schools have summer hours; recommend continued flexibility with 10 days of work and rotation of summer counselor position.
- Explore/discuss timing of scheduling and other means to complete scheduling-- i.e. group, online (group scheduling attempted in 2016).
- Maintain Facebook and Twitter account, which should be updated/maintained by the Counseling Department webmaster.
- We feel there is a need for counseling groups.
- More collaboration with the CST regarding the night that we have planned (*Transitioning to College with an IEP or 504* jointly run, beginning in 2014).

### *Middle School Counselor Recommendations*

- HIB cases should be divided so that counselors do not investigate their own caseload.
  - More direct student contact/smaller counselor caseloads in order to offer more individual/small group attention. Ridgewood is able to meet with 6th grade students in small groups to check on their transition in the fall. Other schools are able to offer more student services due to smaller caseloads.
  - Maintain current team model without looping. Research shows that schools that loop are able to do so because they have smaller caseloads (one counselor per grade), or no teaming.
  - Utilize Naviance for career interest inventories.
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### *Elementary School Counselor Recommendations*

- Provide summer curriculum writing opportunities for counselors to update counseling lessons K-5. Specifically, review anti-bullying modules to modify definition of bullying under HIB law. (Anti-Bullying Module revised in early 2014-15; summer curriculum writing for elementary school was completed in the summer of 2015.)
  - Re-examine the elementary school counselor's role as sole standardized testing coordinator/administrator in each building.
  - Provide more extensive training for all Anti-Bullying Specialists and Administrators on what qualifies as HIB. Streamline the interviewing process for HIB cases to avoid overlapping work for ABS/Administrator and counselors' conflicting roles.
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### **Summary:**

- All schools have comprehensive counseling programs, catering to social, emotional, and academic needs of students, as well as to post-secondary planning.
- Overall, the ratio of students to counselors at Ridge is on the high end of the group. WAMS is at the middle of the pack, and most elementary schools have one counselor per school like Bernards Township.
- Bernards Township has the most SACs; most districts have one.
- Most of the districts have a more comprehensive career curriculum than Bernards Township.
- All but two other districts use social media (Facebook and/or Twitter) to communicate with parents and students.
- Only two comparison high schools have a separate College and Career Counselor. Like Bernards Township, college and career counseling is part of the school counselor's responsibility.

## Perception of Program

In the spring of 2015, the Bernards Township Counseling Department sought the input of district constituents as part of this program evaluation. With the exception of school-specific questions, the items on this anonymous survey were taken from the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) climate survey.

### Respondents

			Number	Percentage
<b>Overall</b>		Student Parent Bernards Township Faculty/Staff Member	124 396 136	18.9% 60.4% 20.7%
<b>Students</b>		Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8 Grade 9 Grade 10 Grade 11 Grade 12	0 0 3 20 33 30 38	0% 0% 2.4% 16.1% 26.6% 24.2% 30.6%
<b>Parents</b>		Grades 9-12 Grades 6-8 Grades K-5	254 71 71	64.1% 17.9% 17.9%
<b>Faculty/ Staff</b>		Grades 9-12 Grades 6-8 Grades K-5	58 36 42	42.6% 26.5% 30.9%

## Student Perceptions of the Bernards Township School Counseling Program

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
School counselors offer to help students need in educational program planning.	4.0%	12.9%	25.8%	33.9%	23.4%
A counselor is available if I need help in solving personal problems.	6.5%	16.9%	28.2%	26.6%	21.8%
Our school's programs help students to understand and get along with other people.	10.5%	25%	33.9%	19.4%	11.3%
I am satisfied with the way students are treated by counselors.	8.1%	9.7%	26.6%	31.5%	24.2%
I am satisfied with the help students get from school personnel in solving personal problems.	9.7%	11.3%	31.5%	33.9%	13.7%
School counselors give students the help they need in planning a vocation/career.	10.5%	21.8%	30.6%	25.0%	12.1%
Our school is doing a good job of helping students understand their moral and ethical responsibilities.	8.9%	18.5%	35.5%	22.6%	14.5%
School personnel involve community services (mental health, law enforcement, etc.) when necessary to help meet students' needs.	5.6%	12.1%	35.5%	32.3%	14.5%
There is NOT a significant problem with substance abuse among the students of this school.	33.1%	27.4%	23.4%	10.5%	5.6%

### Summary:

At least three quarters of students rated school counselors' ability to help with educational planning and solve personal problems at neutral or better. A greater number, about 79%, are neutral or satisfied with the way students are treated by counselors and with the help they get from school personnel in solving problems.

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However, more students are neutral or dissatisfied with the career/vocational planning received at Ridge, indicating an area in which the program might be lacking. Also, about 60% of Ridge students believe substance abuse is a significant problem among students.

## Parent Perceptions of the Bernards Township School Counseling Program

	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>
Our school's programs help students to understand and get along with other people.	3.5%	11.4%	28.5%	34.8%	21.7%
I am satisfied with the way students are treated by counselors.	4.8%	11.6%	17.9%	31.1%	34.6%
I am satisfied with the help students get from school personnel in solving personal problems.	6.6%	9.1%	35.9%	26.8%	21.7%
Our school is doing a good job in career/vocational education.	7.6%	13.1%	44.7%	21.5%	13.1%
Our school is doing a good job of helping students understand their moral and ethical responsibilities.	3.3%	9.6%	29.0%	33.3%	24.7%
School personnel involve community services (mental health, law enforcement, etc.) when necessary to help meet students' needs.	5.1%	7.3%	32.1%	32.0%	23.2%
There is NOT a significant problem with substance abuse among the students of our schools.	22.7%	22.0%	28.8%	11.4%	15.2%
School counselors give students the help they need in curricular planning.	8.1%	13.4%	27.8%	27.8%	23%
School counselors give students the help they need in planning a vocation/career.	11.1%	18.2%	41.4%	19.9%	9.3%
Our school does a good job in preventing students from dropping out by providing them with support and encouragement they need.	5.3%	3.8%	43.4%	23.2%	24.2%
The school appropriately meets the needs of children with physical and mental disabilities.	4.3%	6.6%	29.8%	33.3%	26.0%
The school's programs meet the requirements of students with special needs.	3.3%	7.8%	29.5%	30.6%	28.8%

### Summary:

Survey results show parents feel similarly to the students. Overall, results show counselors are successful at guiding students academically and providing them with support and encouragement, but that parents also find that the vocational/career aspect is lacking. Parents also believe that substance abuse is a significant problem at Ridge.

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## Faculty/Staff Perceptions of the Bernards Township School Counseling Program

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Our school's programs help students to understand and get along with other people.	0%	5.9%	25.7%	49.3%	19.1%
I am satisfied with the way students are treated by counselors.	1.5%	7.4%	21.3%	33.1%	36.8%
I am satisfied with the help students get from school personnel in solving personal problems.	2.9%	5.1%	15.4%	42.6%	33.8%
Our school is doing a good job in career/vocational education.	11%	19.9%	35.3%	25.0%	8.8%
Our school is doing a good job of helping students understand their moral and ethical responsibilities.	1.5%	10.3%	26.5%	38.2%	23.5%
There is NOT a significant problem with substance abuse among the students of our schools.	19.9%	19.9%	15.4%	14.7%	30.1%
School counselors give students the help they need in curricular planning.	5.9%	15.4%	31.6%	27.9%	19.1%
School counselors give students the help they need in planning a vocation/career.	10.3%	16.2%	41.2%	21.3%	11.0%
Our school does a good job in preventing students from dropping out by providing them with support and encouragement they need.	1.5%	7.4%	39.7%	33.1%	18.4%
The school appropriately meets the needs of children with physical and mental disabilities.	1.5%	4.4%	19.1%	43.4%	31.6%
The school's programs meet the requirements of students with special needs.	0%	5.9%	23.5%	40.4%	30.1%

### Summary:

Bernards Township Faculty echo the sentiments of parents and students, rating counselors more favorably in most categories. Again, responses were more tempered in the career/vocational questions and strongly unfavorable in regards to substance abuse being an issue in the schools.

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## Ridge Student Perceptions of the High School Counseling Program (121 Respondents)

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Our school does a good job in preventing students from dropping out by providing them with the support and encouragement they need.	1.7%	6.6%	28.1%	37.2%	26.4%
School counselors give students the help they need in making post-secondary plans.	5%	9.9%	26.4%	31.4%	27.3%

I know my Naviance username/password.	<b>Yes</b>	87.6%	<b>No</b>	12.4%
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What is the main way you get information from the RHS Counseling Department?	Naviance email “blasts”	36.4%
	Morning announcements	5.8%
	Counseling Department website	9.1%
	Friday Folders	16.5%
	Direct emails from my counselor	19%
	My parent(s)/guardian(s) tell me	11.6%
	Other	1.7%
How would you prefer to get information from the Counseling Department?	Via email/Naviance blasts	85.1%
	Morning announcements	24.0%
	Counseling Department website	22.3%
	Friday Folders	29.8%
	Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	22.3%
	Other	1.7%

How helpful/useful was each of the following Counseling modules?						
	Not Very	Just OK	Good	Excellent	Don't Remember	I didn't experience it, or haven't experienced it yet
8th Grade Scheduling Conference - Grade 8	6.6%	23.1%	32.2%	19.0%	13.2%	5.8%
Freshmen Orientation - Grade 9	5.8%	19.8%	39.7%	22.3%	5.8%	6.6%
Program of Studies/ Scheduling Information - Grades 9-11	3.3%	20.7%	41.3%	30.6%	3.3%	0.8%
Sophomore Career Module (Naviance/Do What You Are) - Grade 10	9.1%	18.2%	24.8%	10.7%	9.9%	27.3%
Navigating the College Process - Grade 11	3.3%	10.7%	28.1%	17.4%	2.5%	38%
Junior Conference - Grade 11	4.1%	7.4%	16.5%	29.8%	2.5%	39.7%
Senior Mechanics - Grade 12	4.1%	5.8%	11.6%	14.9%	2.5%	61.2%

### Summary:

Of the student respondents, more than three quarters feel the high school modules were at least “OK” or better in regards to usefulness. Students prefer to get their information via email (Naviance Blasts or Friday Folder), but would also use social media/apps if they were available.

## Ridge Parent Perceptions of the High School Counseling Program (254 Respondents)

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
There is NOT a significant problem with substance abuse among the students of this school.	29.1%	29.5%	23.6%	11.4%	6.3%
Our school does a good job in preventing students from dropping out by providing them with the support and encouragement they need.	5.1%	6.7%	42.9%	27.2%	18.1%
School counselors give students the help they need in making post-secondary plans.	8.3%	13.0%	29.1%	28.7%	20.9%

I know my Naviance username/password.	<b>Yes</b>	79.5%	<b>No</b>	20.5%
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What is the main way you get information from the RHS Counseling Department?	Naviance email "blasts"	14.6%
	RHS website (announcements)	5.5%
	Counseling Department website	5.1%
	Friday Folders	57.5%
	Direct emails from my counselor	13.8%
	Other	3.5%
How would you prefer to get information from the Counseling Department?	Via email/Naviance blasts	68.1%
	RHS website (announcements)	16.9%
	Counseling Department website	16.1%
	Friday Folders	49.6%
	Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	1.6%
	Other	6.3%

How helpful/useful was each of the following Parent Nights/Events?						
	Not Very	Just OK	Good	Excellent	Don't Remember	I didn't attend, or haven't attended yet based on my child's grade
Academic Planning Night	2.4%	15%	40.6%	23.6%	4.7%	13.8%
8th Grade Scheduling Conference	7.9%	18.9%	28%	30.3%	4.7%	10.2%
Introduction to Standardized Testing Night	2.8%	14.6%	29.5%	15.4%	6.3%	31.5%
Introduction to College Planning Night	1.6%	9.1%	36.2%	28.3%	2.4%	22.4%
Junior Conference	3.5%	8.7%	21.7%	35%	1.6%	29.5%
College Admissions Panel	2.4%	9.4%	23.2%	13.4%	3.5%	48%
Transitioning to College for Students with IEPs & 504s	2.4%	7.1%	9.1%	3.5%	3.9%	74%
Senior Mechanics Parent Night	1.6%	5.5%	14.6%	12.2%	5.1%	61%

### Summary:

Of parent respondents, over 90% feel the high school modules were at least "OK" or better in regards to usefulness. Most ranked them at "good" or "excellent." Parents also prefer to get their information via email.



### WAMS Student Perceptions of the Middle School Counseling Program (3 Respondents)

How helpful/useful was each of the following Counseling modules?						
	Not Very	Just OK	Good	Excellent	Don't Remember	I didn't attend, or haven't attended yet based on my grade
Presentations by counselors/students in your 5th grade classroom		33.3%			33.3%	33.3%
5th to 6th Grade Parent Transition Night		33.3%			33.3%	33.3%
Tour of WAMS at the end of 5th Grade		33.3%	33.3%			33.3%
Mid-year "tune-up" presentations in the auditorium with your counselor		66.7%	33.3%			
Academic Planning Night	33.3%	66.7%				
Scheduling Presentation from Mrs. Shadis (in school)		66.7%				33.3%
8th Grade Scheduling Conference at WAMS		66.7%		33.3%		

**Summary:**

Too few students responded to draw any reliable conclusions.

### WAMS Parent Perceptions of the Middle School Counseling Program (71 Respondents)

How helpful/useful was each of the following Counseling modules?						
	Not Very	Just OK	Good	Excellent	Don't Remember	I didn't attend, or haven't attended yet based on my child's grade
5th to 6th Grade Parent Transition Night	5.6%	15.5%	39.4%	22.5%	4.2%	12.7%
Academic Planning Night	4.2%	8.5%	28.2%	12.7%	5.6%	40.8%
8th Grade Scheduling Conference at WAMS	5.6%	16.9%	28.2%	12.7%	1.4%	35.2%

**Summary:**

Over half of those who attended felt middle school programming surrounding the transitions into and out of William Annin was "good" or "excellent."

## Common Themes in Open Ended Responses

	N
Counselors are too busy/have too many students/need to provide more individualized attention	
Scheduling process/advisement needs work/is too rushed	
Counseling support staff could be more helpful	
Career/vocational programming needs to be strengthened	
College info should be provided earlier/process should start earlier	
There is an inconsistency between Ridge counselors	
Drug/alcohol issues are prevalent among students	
Survey should have had an "N/A" or "Don't know" option	

### Summary:

Despite caseloads under the recommended ratio as set forth by the American School Counselor Association, the perception is that counselors have too many students to provide the individualized attention constituents would like. Smaller caseloads could address many items on this list.

Not providing a "not applicable" or "don't know" option on the survey may also have altered the reliability of the results, as respondents were required to answer all questions. This likely forced more respondents to respond "neutral." The NSSE did not offer an N/A-type response, which is why it was not included in this survey.

# Analysis

## Program Strengths

- The Counseling Program is well-aligned laterally (at the elementary school level) and vertically under the guidance of a single supervisor. It is current, and aligns with professional and state standards.
  - Counselors are well-prepared, extremely professional, and dedicated to the students of Bernards Township.
  - Counselors consistently work closely with all stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents and students) to deliver the program.
  - The college-planning component of the high school program is well-developed, as is evidenced by student success in college admissions.
  - On the whole, the Counseling program is viewed favorably by its stakeholders.
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## Program Limitations

- No formal middle school curriculum currently exists.
  - There is insufficient attention given to career planning, K-12.
  - The use of Naviance & Family Connection is limited to Ridge High School students, and thus not used to maximum potential.
  - Though caseloads in the middle and high schools are just about at the American School Counselor Association's recommended maximum of 1:250, they are higher than comparison districts'. Bernards Township students and parents seek more attention and services than counselors are able to provide.
  - Counselors feel as they are tasked with duties outside their role of student advocate.
  - Time and staffing limitations have not allowed the Counseling Department to adequately keep up with the rise in mental health issues among the student body over the years.
-

## Recommendations for Improvement

- Programming:
  - Write Middle School Curriculum, aligning modules to ASCA standards, to complete the district's K-12 Counseling Curriculum.
  - Develop a vertically-aligned, K-12 Career Exploration program for the district.
    - Increase attention to career planning and post-secondary transition that extends beyond college planning, as was recommended by counselors and highlighted as a need by constituents.
    - Expand the use of Naviance to middle school students to assist with career exploration to support the above, as was recommended by William Annin counselors.
  - Increase/improve communication to students and parents using multiple media
    - Reinstate a Counseling Department newsletter or blog for parents.
    - Utilize social media platforms to distribute information.
  - Develop proactive programming to better identify and address mental-health issues, which have drastically risen in the student population since the last program evaluation (see *Trends in Mental Health* reports). Group counseling would be beneficial in this arena. This may be dependent upon staffing.
- Staffing:
  - Current staff and/or job assignments do not allow for sufficient addressing of mental-health issues (see *Trends In Mental Health* reports).
  - Counselor research of districts revealed that all comparative high schools have summer days for counselors. Budget for one counselor to be on staff each week of the summer to work on the following:
    - Review schedules for errors *prior* to them being posted on HAC for students to see
    - Complete summer registrations so that all students can be accommodated *before* the first day of school
    - Revamp/*improve* curriculum and/or modules annually, instead of just updating the dates from year-to-year, as is current practice
- Other
  - Since group scheduling was less-than-successful in 2016, seek a Student Information System that will allow for detailed, online scheduling at the high school level in order to streamline the scheduling process.
  - Attract additional interns by making an exception to the audio/video-taping policy, so that graduate students will be permitted by their colleges and universities to complete their practicums/internships in Bernards Township.