

# **Elmira City School District**

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Counseling Audit Recommendations



# Overview of the Task

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- At the request of the superintendent, Dr. Raymond Bryant, February 22—24, 2006, the review team conducted 90-minute interviews with selected Elmira City students, counselors, teachers, administrators, parents and community members.
- The purpose: to conduct a review of the district's guidance offices and compare them against current best practices.

*Every Student  
Succeeds*

Respect, Integrity, Dignity

Team Work

Welcoming Environment

Hard  
Work

Safety  
and  
Security

Creative  
Thinking

Community  
Connections

Self-Confidence

Embracing  
Diversity

High Expectations





# Research Shows...

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- By high school, nearly 40-60% of all students are chronically disengaged from school (Klem and Connell, 2004).



# Research Shows...

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- Students who are connected to school are less likely to:
  - Use substances
  - Exhibit emotional distress
  - Demonstrate deviant/destructive behavior
  - Experience suicidal thoughts/attempt suicide
  - Become pregnant
  - Skip school
  - Engage in bullying/fighting/vandalism
  
- (Lonczak, Abbot, Hawkins, Kosterman & Catalano, 2002; Samdal, Nutbeam, Wold & Kannas, 1998; Schapps, 2003; Wilson & Elliott, 2003).



# Research Shows...

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- In order to increase school-student connections:
  - Implement high standards
  - Provide academic supports to all students
  - Implement fair/consistent discipline policies
  - Create trusting relationships (in-school and school-home)
  - Support teachers in using new instructional strategies and implementing classroom management
  - Foster high parent/family expectations
  - Ensure that students feel close to at least one adult in the school building
    - Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health & University of MN, 2003)



# American School Counseling Association (ASCA) Professional School Counselors . . .

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- ❑ Support student development to increase student success
- ❑ Promote peer facilitation skills
- ❑ Advocate for all students
- ❑ Promote rigorous academic programming for all students
- ❑ Provide strategies and services to close the achievement gap
- ❑ Monitor data to increase student achievement



# Findings

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- ECS students want to develop better relationships with adults in the school building; particularly with adults who interact with them, are approachable, use hands-on instructional strategies, and are fair.
- ECS students wish there were more elective courses and more school activities.



# Findings

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- ECS students have ambitious hopes and dreams for the future (e.g. lawyer, veterinarian, travel agents).
- ECS students wish the community had more to offer (e.g. shops, movies, etc.) and many predict that they will move after graduation to other regions of the country.



# Findings

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- ❑ ECS students mentioned a desire to take AP tests but an inability to afford the exams.
- ❑ Similar student perceptions were present between the middle schools.
- ❑ Large differences existed in student perceptions between the two high schools.
- ❑ Across all groups we heard perceptions about subgroups of students (low income, foster care, African American, transplanted families, etc.) that may impact the school climate and expectations.



# Counselors on Counseling...

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- ❑ Number 1 priority: identified the need for behavior management systems that are consistent and have consequences. Counselors feel they spend too much time on discipline issues.
- ❑ Counselors want fewer required meetings (CIM, 504, CSE, Parent, Team).
- ❑ Counselors are frustrated because of their inability to modify/adjust student schedules.



# Counselors on Counseling...

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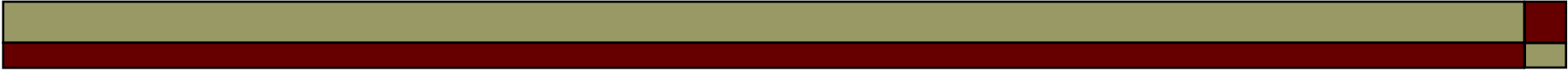
- Counselors want smaller caseloads so more time can be spent with students.
- Counselors want to raise awareness of their job responsibilities and receive more public support for what they do.



# ECS students want...

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- ❑ More opportunities to interact with school counselors about classes, problems, college, and the future.
- ❑ Two-way discussions about class selection.
- ❑ More information about the college process.
- ❑ More scholarship information.
- ❑ More efforts to identify and connect student interests to the high school schedule and college selection.
- ❑ More help finding colleges that offer their potential majors.



# Words of Wisdom (WOW) from ECS Students on Counseling

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- ❑ “I want my counselor to understand me and actually want to help me with my life and what I want to do.”
- ❑ “Consider the ability of kids not just the grades. Some kids don’t try because they are bored, not because they can’t do the work.”
- ❑ “I think it would be better if they gave us more information but start earlier so then we have more time to think about it and where we are going and what we want to do because a lot of people don’t know what they want to do with themselves.”
- ❑ “If it weren’t for my counselor bugging me, I still wouldn’t have applied to any colleges.”



# Counseling Audit Recommendations

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- **Recommendation 1:** Institute the American School Counseling Association Model in every school.
- **Recommendation 2:** Develop a four-year plan, for each student beginning in the 8th grade. This plan needs to be based on the optimal learning potential and diverse student interests for all students regardless of color, SES, or gender.
- **Recommendation 3:** Increase central office leadership and oversight of policy setting regarding the role of school counselors and professional development of counselors.
- **Recommendation 4:** The ECS needs to improve communication among and between stakeholder groups.
- **Recommendation 5:** Examine ECS course offerings for rigor and relevance to district academic targets under No Child Left Behind.



# Counseling Audit Recommendations

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- ❑ **Recommendation 6:** Enhance community partnerships to increase opportunities and supports for ECS students.
- ❑ **Recommendation 7:** Professional development needs to be offered based on needs assessments, training implementation, and follow up.
- ❑ **Recommendation 8:** Examine and create district level policies in the following areas in light of new research: student attendance requirements, minimum grade/graduation requirements, and promotion/retention policies.
- ❑ **Recommendation 9:** A consistent, proactive, positive behavior management system needs to be in place in every school building.



**Counseling Audit Alignment  
with ASCA model and  
ECSD Priorities**

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Theme	Counseling Audit Recommendations	ASCA National Model	Center for Curriculum Renewal Recommendations
<p>Improve horizontal and vertical articulation for students.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>Develop a four-year plan, for each student beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This plan needs to be based on the optimal learning potential and diverse student interests for all students regardless of color, SES, or gender.</p>	<p><b>6. Individual Student Planning</b></p> <p>6.1 There is a systemic approach to helping students make appropriate educational plans</p>	<p><b>3.1 High Expectations.</b> Establish and overall plan for increasing expectations for all students within subgroups, in all grade levels, and in all schools.</p> <p><b>3.4 Grade Six Transition.</b> Focus on middle school transitions (5 to 6 and 8 to 9) as priorities for the middle school.</p> <p><b>11.1 Adults Connected to Students.</b> Based on principle that every student belongs to every adult in the learning setting.</p>

Theme	Counseling Audit Recommendations	ASCA National Model	Center for Curriculum Renewal Recommendations
Central office leadership.	<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>Increase central office leadership and oversight of policy setting regarding the role of school counselors and professional developments of counselors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Survey counselors for training needs and about duties assigned that are outside of their role</li> <li>•Rewrite counselor position descriptions</li> <li>•Rewrite counselor performance evaluation tool.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Domains and Goals</b></p> <p>3.1 Goals have been written for the school counseling program</p> <p>3.2 Reflects the domains in the ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs.</p>	<p><b>1.0 Delineate Roles and Responsibilities.</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Job Descriptions.</b> Develop clear job descriptions for all positions including counselors.</p> <p><b>1.2. Integrated System.</b> Analyze job descriptions as a whole for vertical/horizontal articulation/gaps/unintended overlap.</p> <p><b>1.3. Supervision and evaluation.</b></p> <p><b>2.1 Professional Development.</b> Include a combination of building level, job-alike and function-based PD.</p> <p><b>2.2. Shared Expertise.</b> Shared accountability/responsibility.</p>

Theme	Counseling Audit Recommendations	ASCA National Model	Center for Curriculum Renewal Recommendations
<p>Improve communication between ECS school personnel, students and community members.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>The ECS needs to improve communication among and between stakeholder groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Develop coordinated PD schedule with vertical articulation.</li> <li>•Improve student access to counselors (post schedules, meet during lunch, identify counselors on duty when others not available.</li> <li>•School counseling office should: host events for the school community, hold student advisement periods, post senior high calendar of events.</li> <li>•Publicize school district events (billboards, media, print, PSAs).</li> </ul>	<p><b>14. Use of Time/Calendar</b></p> <p>14.7 Master calendar is published and distributed to appropriate persons, students staff parents, and community</p> <p>14.8 The counselors weekly/monthly schedule is posted.</p>	<p><b>9.0 Communication.</b></p> <p><b>9.1 Addressing Gaps.</b> Address communication gaps with leadership during process of defining roles/responsibilities.</p> <p><b>9.2 Communication with Families.</b> Build into existing initiative.</p> <p><b>9.3 Create a Communication Plan.</b></p>

Theme	Counseling Audit Recommendations	ASCA National Model	Center for Curriculum Renewal Recommendations
<p>Improve rigor of course offerings.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 5</b> Examine ECS course offerings for rigor and relevance to district academic targets under No Child Left Behind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Abolish courses that do not support core content areas (e.g. Silent Study Time)</li> <li>-Add cores that support content areas (e.g. Math Enrichment, Writing and Composition, Public Speaking)</li> <li>-Develop course guide for high school</li> <li>-Partner with local colleges (e.g. discuss needed skills for students to inform decisions about increasing rigor and offer</li> </ul>	<p><b>12. Use of Data and Closing the Gap</b></p> <p>12.3 Data is systemically analyzed to determine where students are and where they out to be</p> <p>12.4 The identified needs become sources for the determination of closing-the-gap activities</p>	<p><b>3.1 High Expectations.</b> Establish a plan for increasing expectations for all students within all subgroups, in all grade levels, and in all schools. Plan may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review of curriculum for alignment with standards.</li> <li>-Tie the curriculum to standards-based assessments at the classroom, school, and district levels.</li> <li>-Explore ways to increase student level accountability through, for example, tutorials and required support for failing or underachieving students</li> </ul>

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Enhanced Community Relationships	<p><b>Recommendation 6</b> Enhance community partnerships to increase opportunities and supports for ECS students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Host regular dialogue with community stakeholder group to enhance partnership</li> <li>-Develop a directory of community resources for Chemung County</li> <li>-Develop community-based opportunities for students (e.g. internships, co-ops, service learning, mentoring, etc)</li> <li>-Establish student support centers within each school to connect school/home/community</li> </ul>	<p><b>8. System Support</b> 8.4 Counselors serve on department, district-level subject councils, community committees and/or advisory councils.</p>	<p><b>9.0 Communication.</b></p> <p><b>9.2 Communication with Families.</b></p> <p><b>9.3 Create a Communication Plan.</b> What is important to communicate? To whom? Through what means? Identify critical purposes, audiences, and approaches to communication. Use these to analyze existing approaches to communication and revise as necessary.</p>

Theme	Counseling Audit Recommendations	ASCA National Model	Center for Curriculum Renewal Recommendations
<p><b>Align professional development with needs</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 7</b> Professional development needs to be offered based on needs assessments, training implementation, and follow up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Establish vision: intervention is the responsibility of all staff</li> <li>-Query staff on PD needs</li> <li>-Provide teacher training on: learning styles, differentiated instruction (including hands-on techniques), positive behavioral management strategies</li> <li>-Monitor teachers who receive poor performance evaluations for effectiveness</li> <li>-Provide PD on diversity issues (e.g. effectively teaching African American learners)</li> </ul>	<p><b>8. System Support</b> 8.2 Counselors provide professional development to staff regarding the school counseling program.</p>	<p><b>1.3 Supervision and Evaluation.</b> <b>2.1 Professional Development.</b> <b>3.1 High Expectations.</b> <b>4.1 Instructional Strategies.</b> Develop differentiated training and feedback opportunities for new and veteran teachers at different levels of expertise, and for teachers at different grade levels/content areas. <b>7.2 Content Areas.</b> Recognize the need for specific PD in content areas. <b>7.3 Follow-up.</b> Create a commitment at the school level to go deeper with PD. <b>10.1 Inequalities.</b> Review and address perceived inequities. <b>11.1 Adults Connected to Students.</b> Every student belongs to every adult in the learning setting.</p>

Theme	Counseling Audit Recommendations	ASCA National Model	Center for Curriculum Renewal Recommendations
Review district policies for reflection of best practices	<p><b>Recommendation 8</b> Examine and create district level policies in the following areas in light of new research: student attendance requirements, minimum grade/graduation requirements, and promotion/retention policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Develop a workgroup to develop new research-based policies/procedures that address each area</li> <li>-Conduct system-wide training on new policies</li> <li>-Monitor implementation of new policies</li> </ul>	<p><b>13 Action Plans</b> 13.3Closing-the-Gap action plans that address the academic, career, and person/social domains are drafted for every student.</p>	<p><b>8.0 Policy</b></p> <p><b>8.1 Policy Analysis.</b> Develop a plan for analyzing district policy related to curriculum, instruction and assessment, and create/augment/drop as needed.</p>

Theme	Counseling Audit Recommendations	ASCA National Model	Center for Curriculum Renewal Recommendations
Behavior management	<p><b>Recommendation 9</b> A consistent, proactive, positive behavior management system needs to be in place in every school building.</p>	<p><b>8. System Support</b> 8.1 System support services have been created collaboratively with counselors and administrators</p>	N/A



# Questions/Comments?

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Every Student Succeeds!



# Contact Information

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- Stephanie Wood-Garnett,  
[s\\_woodgarnett@hotmail.com](mailto:s_woodgarnett@hotmail.com)
- Robin Levien, [robin@levien.net](mailto:robin@levien.net)