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When ASCA and MTSS Merge: A case study on counselor capacity and the implementation and monitoring of Tier Two interventions

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WHEN ASCA AND MTSS MERGE: A CASE STUDY ON COUNSELOR CAPACITY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF TIER TWO INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

WHEN ASCA AND MTMDSS MERGE: A CASE STUDY ON COUNSELOR CAPACITY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF TIER TWO INTERVENTIONS

by Tram "Nikki" Dang

The national average student-to-counselor ratio is currently 477 students to one counselor; almost nearly double the 250:1 ratio that the ASCA National Model (2005) recommends. With the existing ratios as high as 1000 students per counselor, counselors and their respective counseling programs provide minimal impact (Carrell, S. E. & Carrell, S. A., 2006). In the Silicon Valley High School District (a pseudonym), high schools with high student-to-counselor ratios may result in subpopulations of students whose needs are not being served and or met. Although counselors express wanting to incorporate additional Tier Two interventions, counselor participants feel they do not have the bandwidth and or capacity to do so. This qualitative case study explores factors in a high school counselor's role that contribute to their capacity to implement Tier Two interventions, how they determine what Tier Two groups to support, and how high school counseling programs implement and monitor Tier Two interventions in the Silicon Valley High School District. Findings indicate the counselors in the district offer an array of academic Tier Two interventions. However, the demands of the counseling role prevent other important Tier Two services from being provided.

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DEDICATION

It goes without question that I have been continually inspired by the strong work ethic of my family and friends. Specifically, I dedicate my work to my parents and sisters who were the leading examples of diligence, perseverance, and strength. Mẹ, Ba, I know you were only able to receive a few years of elementary education. Part of the reason why I pursued this degree is to make you proud and show you that your sacrifices helped raise a daughter who worked hard to the first doctoral degree in our family. The independence and trust you afforded me led me to the accomplishments I have achieved to date.

I also dedicate this body of work to all first-generation students. To the first-generation students with whom I grew up-your diligence and passion have inspired me. We figured it out with the support of each other. We did it despite the obstacles we faced. And we achieved the ultimate gift of being able to provide for our parents in an attempt to show them our gratitude.

To my friends that have become family, I am extremely grateful for your unconditional love and support-it has been invaluable. Your jokes, encouragement, and continual growth have always moved me.

To my village, my circle, my people, this body of work is dedicated to you.

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This chapter will provide historical context to the role of the school counselor and identify key concerns for the current school counselor. The statement and significance of the problem will lay down the framework for the purpose of this study. The chapter will include the three main research questions of this study, and initial definitions to support the reader. The chapter concludes with information regarding the site selection and sample of the study, as well as the scope and limitations.

The Role of the School Counselor

The role of the school counselor is ever changing and has morphed into a role that is very different from its original intentions. In the early stages of counseling, school counselors were typically teachers who provided vocational guidance to students preparing for the world of work. By the 1980s, school counselors were being trained to provide a more comprehensive and developmental model of counseling (Carrell, S. E. & Carrell, S. A., 2006). With the continued influx of immigrants to the United States, changing student populations have dramatically shifted the variety of activities and responsibilities counselors assume. Variable and diverse populations, school level, and school size all affect the roles of different school counselors (Lieberman, 2004). Now, with a robust college going culture and enhanced awareness of student mental health needs, the role of the school counseling has become even more demanding.

Beginning in the 1970s, many states began to adopt and develop individual counseling models for the organization and management of school counseling programs (Carey et al., 2012). In 1997, in conjunction with the American School Counselor

Association (ASCA), Campbell and Dahir published the National Standards for School Counseling, which encompass standards for academic, career, and social development. Shortly after the standards were published, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2005) developed the ASCA National Model, a framework for school counseling. Many foundational elements of the ASCA National model can be attributed to Gysbers and Henderson's (2000) focus on guidance and comprehensive counseling (Baker, 2011). The model is complete in scope, preventive in design, and developmental in nature (Baker, 2011). The delivery of the ASCA model consists of a school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support (Baker, 2011). In addition to providing standards, the model includes a framework for designing, implementing, coordinating, managing, and evaluating counseling programs.

ASCA was created in 1952 to provide professional development, enhance school counseling programs and research effective school counseling practices (The American School Counselor Association, n.d.). According to ASCA (2005), counselors have the monumental task of being responsible for students' academic, career, and personal/social development (Moyer, 2011). Although the ASCA model has practical recommendations for school counseling, typical demands of the school counselor include heavy caseloads, little to no clinical supervision, and environments with constant role ambiguity (Brewer & Clippard, 2002). With elevated expectations and demands for the school counselor, it becomes crucial for counselors to define their role within the context of their schools and student support services.

The efforts of the ASCA model and the aforementioned researchers persist to support

a professional role dedicated to the success of all students. However, since the role of the counselor is unclear to many stakeholders, and counselors are continually assigned non-counselor duties (Burnham & Jackson, 2000), school counselors are not able to serve all the students on their caseloads. As a result, although counselors are able to deliver curriculum to and support students in crisis, there are many students with needs that are not being addressed. This study takes a closer look at how counselors might support the needs of subpopulations of students, also known as Tier Two populations (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016). According to Lee and Ekstrom (1987), individuals in the most need of counseling services, such as students from lower socioeconomic homes and underrepresented families, receive less guidance than students in the general population. Such subpopulations of students need the most academic guidance and currently counselors are unable to meet all students' needs.

This chapter will examine current issues in school counseling and outline specific terms that will be used throughout this body of work. The chapter will define a specific problem of practice, the purpose of this study, and three research questions that will be addressed in this dissertation. Lastly, this chapter will discuss the site and sample group of the study, the limitations of the study, as well as the assumptions, background, and role of the researcher.

Counselor Role Ambiguity

As the needs of students have changed over time, so has the role of the counselor. Administrators, teachers, parents, and even school counselors themselves all understand the school counselor roles and responsibilities differently (Burnham & Jackson, 2000).

According to Ballard and Murgatroyd (1999), these stakeholders are still confused about the contributions of school counselor programs and the role of the school counselor. They posit that further study is needed to define differences among counseling services at various grade levels. Although ASCA maintains that school counselors support students in academic, career, and socio-emotional development, and counselors are responsible for completing duties specific to their school counseling program, counselors are asked to complete non-counselor duties such as supervision, substituting for teachers, clerical tasks, discipline, etc. (Moyer, 2011).

Counselor Ratios

The role of the high school counselor is instrumental in preparing students for their post-secondary lives. ASCA (2005) recommends a 250 to 1, student to counselor ratio. Unfortunately, California has the third highest student to counselor ratios in the nation, averaging 708 students to every 1 counselor and lagging behind the national average of 470 to 1 (Patel & Clinedinst, 2019). Although S. E. Carrell and S. A. Carrell's (2006) study found empirical evidence that lower student to counselor ratios decrease disciplinary problems and the share of students involved in disciplinary incidents, counselor ratios still remain large for a majority of high school counselors across the nation.

Statement of the Problem

The national average student-to-counselor ratio is currently 470 students to one counselor; almost nearly double the 250:1 ratio that the ASCA National Model (2005) recommends. In addition, the California Department of Education (2003) recommends a

ratio of one counselor to 364 high school students. With the existing ratios as high as 1000 high school students per counselor, counseling programs' impact is minimized (Carrell, S. E. & Carrell, S. A., 2006). Supporting such a high volume of students ultimately means there are likely subpopulations of students whose needs are not being served and/or met. To address these high ratios, school counselors have been encouraged to implement a Multi-Tiered, Multi Domain System of Support (MTMDSS) (Hatch, 2013). MTMDSS is a derivative of Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and includes three tiers: A Tier One system provides services to all students, a Tier Two system provides intervention services to some students, and a Tier Three system provides intervention supports to students who need individual attention (Averill et al., 2011). With high ratios as those aforementioned, it may be possible for counselors to implement Tier One supports, *and* address the high needs of those students classified under Tier Three, but often students who would fall under Tier Two are not being supported. More often than not, a student who falls under Tier Two is in danger of not meeting academic and or behavioral expectations.

Significance of the Problem

Currently, high school counselors across the United States are responsible for supporting an extremely high volume of students and in California the average ratio sits at 708 to 1 (Patel & Clinedinst, 2019). However, the role of school counselors is not clearly defined and many administrators and counselors themselves are unsure of their role within their schools (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). To clarify the high school

counselor role, comprehensive counseling programs encourage the implementation of a MTSS, which incorporates three tiers of graduated support within a school system.

While high school counselors may be able to instruct all students through counseling curriculum delivered in classroom presentations and assemblies, focused attention for students in crises requires the individualized attention and time of the school counselor. Such cases include Section 504 plan meetings, students who are referred to receive additional emotional support, students who are in danger of not meeting graduation requirements, etc. (Carrell, S. E. & Carrell, S. A., 2006; Sink, 2016). As the high school counselor's time and attention is diverted to Tier One and Tier Three supports, students in need of Tier Two interventions are left behind. Subpopulations of these students may include the students who have earned one or more D grades, and have lost their college eligibility, or other students who are struggling to manage their anger or stress. Tier Two students need the support of their counselors, but this support is limited with high student to counselor ratios (Carrell, S. E. & Carell, S. A., 2006).

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine what contributes to a counselor's ability to implement Tier Two interventions, as well as learn how counselors use a MTMDSS model to identify, implement, and monitor Tier Two interventions. Tier Two groups typically include students who are at risk of not meeting academic and or behavioral expectations (ASCA, 2014). According to Belser, Shillingford, and Joe (2016), MTSS may offer one solution for systemic educational disparities such as students of color who are fed into the school-to-prison pipeline. Other groups may include students who

experience anxiety, depression, and/or social withdrawal to the extent that progress in school and general life adjustments are severely compromised (Merrell, 2003). The two aforementioned subpopulations of students are not the only Tier Two groups that exist. Rather, the examples showcase the need for counselors to divert specific attention to smaller groups of students that are in desperate need of additional support.

Learning about a counselor's preparation and motivation may benefit future counselors and counselor educators. According to Brott (2006), developing a professional identity as an effective school counselor begins during the training program. Therefore, gathering data regarding how counselors have been trained is essential to learning about how counselors identify and implement interventions. The training program initially shapes the professional identity of a counselor, which serves as a frame of reference for how a counselor carries out their role, makes significant decisions, and develops as a professional (Brott, 2006). Learning about the components of counseling training programs that effectively train counselors on how to implement a comprehensive counseling program are crucial to the support current students receive. Learning about the deficiencies in counseling training programs may also inform counselor educators on how to improve their programs and curriculum and or professional development opportunities.

Determining ways in which counselors elect to identify subpopulations may benefit future counselors who have not received training in a Multi-Tiered System of Support. School counselors are uniquely positioned to play a critical role in the implementation of such programs due to their training in data analysis, program development, and direct

service delivery (Belser et al., 2016). This may be especially effective for counselors who are responsible for a large number of students. By clarifying how school counselors identify subpopulations and define ways in which Tier Two interventions are implemented, this study may provide additional context for the limited literature on supporting Tier Two groups. In addition, the study may help clarify the counselor role and provide specific examples of how high school counselors can manage large student-to-counselor ratios. The purpose of this research is to contribute to the clarification of the school counselor role and to inform current high school counselors on how to improve their comprehensive counseling programs with special attention to their Tier Two populations.

Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions and contribute to current research regarding high school counselors and counseling programs. The first question will inform the second and third questions, and all questions may clarify the role of the school counselor and address the concern of providing interventions and support to all students in need.

RQ 1. What factors in a counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions?

RQ 2. How do high school counselors in a Silicon Valley high school district determine Tier Two groups? What are the tools and instruments used to identify subgroups/sub populations of students that need or would benefit from additional support? What data drives the identification of these groups?

RQ 3. Beyond identifying Tier Two groups in need, how do high school counselors implement a Tier Two system of support? How do counselors manage schedule conflicts and limited time constraints that are inherent in supporting large caseloads of high school students?

Initial Definitions

There are a number of terms that are specific to this study in school counseling. The following terms and abbreviations will be used throughout this writing.

Academic: One of the three areas in which the ASCA model states counselors should be supporting students. This area may include study skills, time management, and course planning to align with post-secondary goals.

ASCA National Model: The ASCA National Model sets clear expectations for school counselor programs to support students in three different areas: social/personal, academic, and college and career.

Career: One of the three areas in which the ASCA model states counselors should be supporting students. This area may include career exploration and personal planning to obtain skills necessary for post-secondary options.

Interventions: When student needs are not being met at the Tier One level, interventions are targeted support at the individual or small group level. Such interventions can address problematic behavior, lower academic achievement, or any other such support that students might need beyond Tier One curriculum

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): A three-tiered, data driven, system of support to address the graduated needs of the student population at a particular school

site. The MTSS is systematic and provides an equitable approach to supporting students with academic and behavioral issues. The model requires universal screening, intervention implementation, and progress monitoring (Belser et al., 2016). The three tiers in which students are categorized are articulated at Tier One, Tier Two, and Tier Three (see below).

Social/Personal: One of the three areas in which the ASCA national model states counselors should be supporting students. This area may include problem solving, appropriate forms of communication, and management of stress and resilience.

Student to Counselor Ratios: This represents the ratio of students to counselors at a specific school site. For example, if there were 1000 students at a school site, and 2 full time counselors, the student to counselor ratio would be 500:1. This means that one counselor would be responsible for supporting 500 students in a school counseling capacity.

Tier One: Students who fall under Tier One are in the general education population and are thriving, given Tier One services (Ockerman et al., 2012). Tier One services include a core counseling curriculum for all students that align with the school counseling belief, vision, mission, goals (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016).

Tier Two: Students who fall under Tier Two need slightly more intensive intervention that can be delivered both individually or in a small group setting (Ockerman et al., 2012). Tier Two services are responsive and are for students who are not successful given Tier One services. Tier Two services are delivered via individual and small group counseling (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016). At risk students, first generation students,

minority students, and students with mental health related concerns are often categorized under Tier Two.

Tier Three: Students who fall under Tier Three need intensive individualized interventions (Ockerman et al., 2012). Tier Three services include support for students in crisis, students who need special attention such as Student Success Team meetings, Section 504 Plans, or Individualized Education Plans (students identified as needing Special Education). Tier Three services often include referrals to other providers and ensure appropriate educational placement (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016).

Site Selection and Sample

The location of the case study was based out of the cities of San José and Sunnyvale. Interviews with two counselors from five high schools in the Silicon Valley High School District (a pseudonym) were conducted. Participants were informed of the study ahead of time and chose to participate. Experience of the counselors ranged from three to twenty years of counseling experience. The counselors worked for the same high school district to showcase the variation of counseling programs within one district.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope and limitations provide context into the parameters of this study. The study focuses on how school counselors in one high school district identify subpopulations of students to support, as well as how counselors deliver targeted interventions. A single researcher who also functions as a school counselor for the same school district has conducted the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is a comprehensive review of literature that focuses on the ever-changing role of the school counselor, school counselor training, the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model, and the Multi-Tiered Multi Domain Systems of Support (MTMDSS) framework. The chapter will show the need to study how counselors feel about their training and profession, and the role of the high school counselor with respect to the implementation of both the ASCA and MTMDSS frameworks. More specifically, the review will reveal the lack of literature and studies on how high school counselors implement interventions for the subpopulations of students in need, also known as Tier Two groups.

The literature review for this study will be driven by the following research questions:

RQ 1: What factors in a high school counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions?

RQ 2: How do high school counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District, with large student to counselor ratios, determine Tier Two groups? What are the tools and instruments used to identify subgroups/sub populations of students that need or would benefit from additional support?

RQ 3: Beyond identifying Tier Two groups in need, how do the high school counselors in Silicon Valley High School District implement and monitor a Tier Two system of support? How do counselors manage schedule conflicts and limited time constraints that are inherent in supporting large caseloads of high school students?

Through a study of 10 different high school counselors in one district in the San Francisco Bay Area in California, this study aims to gain more clarity for the role of the counselor and the capacity at which counselors have to implement interventions.

A comprehensive review of literature about school counseling from its origin, through the development of the counselor role in the last 40 years will be pertinent to this study. The review will then explore how counselors are trained as well as how counselors' motivation affects their implementation of a comprehensive counseling program. The literature will clarify components of a comprehensive counseling program with regards to the ASCA National Model and a Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Support framework, with specific attention to Tier Two. The literature will focus on Tier Two and show the lack of studies that exist on how to implement Tier Two interventions. Lastly, this chapter will conclude with a conceptual framework that articulates the system with which high school counselors work to target Tier Two populations.

The Role of the School Counselor

Late in the 19th and early 20th century, educators found a need for students to be trained and supported prior to entering the workforce. To address this need, teachers began to receive training in vocational guidance (Baker, 2011). In 1911, Bloomfield taught the first university course in vocational counseling to teachers through Harvard University Summer School. By 1913, the very first department of counselor education opened at Boston University and Bloomfield offered a course titled *The Theory and Practice of Vocational Guidance* (Savickas, 2011). In the early 1900's, counseling or guidance programs focused primarily on student moral development and preparation for

the workforce (Baker, 2011). Guidance programs at this time provided experiences and or courses that helped students become employable, helped students find employment, and responded to differing student needs (Baker, 2011).

By the mid-twentieth century, counseling that focused solely on supporting high school students with entry into the workforce evolved as more and more counselors who were not formerly teachers began their careers. Counseling that focused on remediation for high school schools expanded into preventative counseling at the elementary and middle school levels (Baker, 2011). Dinkmeyer's (1967) *developmental guidance* approach encouraged counselors to lead students to understand, help, and accept themselves, which was a very different approach in comparison to the vocational guidance movement.

According to Ballard and Murgatroyd (1999), dramatic changes in the role of the counselor beginning in the 1970's could be attributed to the changes in family composition and financial situations. For example, children of dual career and or single parent families found themselves in less supportive parental environments (Carol, 1993, as cited in Ballard and Murgatroyd, 1999). To further emphasize these challenges to the counselor role, Boyer stated:

> […] In most high schools, counselors are not only expected to advise students about college, they are also asked to police for drugs, keep records of dropouts, reduce teenage pregnancy, check traffic in the halls, smooth out the tempers of irate parents, and give aid and comfort to battered and neglected children. School counselors are expected to do what our communities, our homes, and our churches have not been able to accomplish, and if they cannot, we condemn them for failing to fulfill our high-minded expectations. (Boyer, 1988, p. 3)

Boyer summarizes the plethora of responsibilities counselors have been held

responsible for, including parenting responsibilities outside the scope of guidance. As a result of the wide range of student needs, the counselor's role became poorly defined. According to Borders and Drury (1992), stakeholders in education including administrators, parents, principals, legislators, and even counselors themselves, became both confused and uninformed about the counseling program and the role of the school counselor.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) was concerned about the future of counseling in schools and put forth a series of recommendations in a report titled, "School Counseling: A Profession at Risk" (ACA, 1987). The ACA also convened a "think tank" to more clearly establish the school counselor's role within the educational system. By the late 1990's, 35 states adopted respective comprehensive guidance models to support the role of counselors in schools (Sink & McDonald, 1998). In 1994, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) pushed for the development of National Standards for School Counseling (Dahir, 2004). The National Standards for School Counseling (Campbell & Dahir) were published in 1997 and laid the groundwork for the ASCA National Model (2005), a framework for comprehensive guidance programs. By the early 2000's, the counselor role took a dramatic shift from providing the nebulous term "guidance" to providing a myriad of supports and interventions that ranged from social support, to academic interventions, to meeting the demands of students in crisis. In Dahir's (2004) study, 82% of respondents strongly supported the development of national standards to clarify the school counselor role and solidify components of a comprehensive guidance program.

Although the ASCA National Model, which will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter, has had a strong influence on American state standards for school counseling (Baker, 2011), the role of the school counselor still remains nebulous. In a recent study, Auger and Jeffrey (2017) posit that one of the school counselor's primary roles is to nurture the student-teacher relationship. In other studies, the role of the counselor is meant to support the LGBTQ community (Abreu et al., 2016; Ken, 2017). Simultaneously, McFadden and Curry (2018) emphasize the role of the school counselor in Career Development, similar to the origin of *vocational guidance*. In a recent study (Alger & Luke, 2015) of counselors at one high school, personal descriptions of the role of the counselor ranged from an individual who executes a comprehensive guidance program to one who acts as a liaison between educational stakeholders. Thus, the variety of responses with respect to the role of the school counselor remains unclear. A common thread between all definitions is that the school counselor is meant to support students in need. Therefore, the following study will focus on how high school counselors identify and support students who would benefit from interventions.

Counselor Training and Professional Development

The school counselor is a catalyst in influencing the actions of those who are in a position to directly modify the educational environment of students (Salinger, 1960). In such a crucial role, counselors must be trained to support students in a systematic, efficient, and effective way. The ASCA National Model was released in 2003 (ASCA, 2004) and many counselors received their training before the model became well known nationwide. Thus, the success of the ASCA National Model depends on the willingness

of school counselors to learn new skills, to change outdated practices, and to design and implement ASCA National Model components (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2016). In addition to receiving training on implementing a comprehensive program, counselors must receive training on how to support the various populations in which they will serve. The implementation of effective counseling practices that can increase the equity among students is largely dependent on how counselors have been trained.

Training for counselors does not stop with certification to become a school counselor. Training for counselors can continue through professional development at site and district levels, as well as through continuing education with opportunities such as conferences or consultation-based training. In addition, counselors can engage in action research as ongoing improvement in training to be more effective (Brott, 2006).

Counselor Motivation and Beliefs

By the time Hatch and Chen-Hayes (2008) published their work, no research had discussed school counselor beliefs about the various school counseling program components that align with the ASCA National Model. Learning about why counselors entered the profession, as well as learning about the populations they are invested in supporting may help determine how students are served. Determining what school counselors believe about various program components also may impact their implementation and student outcomes (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). Furthermore, as stated by Hatch and Chen-Hayes (2016), Pajares (1992) suggests that attention to beliefs should be a focus in educational research. Counselor beliefs are reflected in the program that counselors implement.

Carey et al. (2005) completed a study on the development of self-assessment that school districts can use to measure their readiness to implement the ASCA National Model. One of the key elements of this assessment is The School Counselors' Beliefs and Attitudes indicator cluster. This element of the self-assessment targets counselor beliefs and attitudes to specifically determine if such beliefs and attitudes align with the goals and modes of practice suggested by the ASCA National Model (2005). In 2001, Sink and Yillik-Downer conducted a study to investigate school counselor views of a Comprehensive Developmental School Counseling Program (CDSCP) and found that the more school counselors valued a CDSCP, the higher the level of the CDSCP involvement. Between both studies, it is evident that counselor beliefs and attitudes are fundamental and tied to counselor implementation of comprehensive counseling programs.

Counselor Capacity

The National Standards for school counselors as well as the ASCA National Model make recommendations for how counselors should implement their comprehensive counseling programs. However, the realities of professional school counseling present major stumbling blocks for the entry level school counselor. Lack of time, lack of support, and work overload are major cited factors that hinder counselors from being effective practitioners (Brott, 2006). Such roadblocks impede the capacity that counselors have to effectively implement and monitor counseling curriculum and interventions. As stated in Goodman-Scott, Betters-Bubon, & Donohue's study (2016), school counselors face a number of professional challenges in implementing comprehensive programs

including high student caseloads, expectations to conduct activities not aligned with comprehensive programs, and assignments of non-counseling related job activities (Clemens net al., 2009; Culbreth et al., 2005).

Student-to-Counselor Ratios

To effectively implement a comprehensive guidance program, the ASCA National Model recommends a 250:1 student to counselor ratio (ASCA, 2005). Unfortunately, in the United States most schools are nowhere close to this student to counselor ratio. According to the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) ratio report (Hawkins, 2018), American public schools currently serve an average of 482 students, nearly twice the recommended counselor caseload. In California, the state in which this study took place, the ratios were far worse. In the 2010-11 school year, the average counselor caseload reached a high of 1016, and declined to 760 in the 2014-15 school year thanks to a 23% increase in the school counseling work force (Hawkins, 2018).

There is a great amount of support for lowering student to counselor ratios beyond what may be an obvious claim that school counselors need manageable caseloads to effectively support students. Downs et al. (2012) make the point that high student to counselor ratios limit the counselor interaction with high-risk students -those with the greatest needs. Through discussion with counselors in the field, it is evident that large student to counselor ratios negatively affect both counselors and students. When discussing the duties of counselors firsthand, McCarthy, Van Horn Kerne, Calfa, Lamber, and Guzman (2010) found a theme of frustration when talking to school counselors with

large caseloads and the inability to address the needs of all students. As stated in Moyer (2011), Downs et al. (2002) found that counselors at schools with higher ratios were overwhelmed with providing services to students and routinely neglected their own professional development. Similarly, in the McCarthy et al. (2011) study, school counselors in Texas with higher caseloads and less resources experienced more stress than both the group of counselors with lower caseloads, and the group of counselors with an adequate amount of resources for their caseload.

Beyond the implications that exist supporting lower student to counselor ratios, the empirical evidence must also be considered. There has been a significant amount of research to support the ASCA Model's recommended student to counselor ratio of 250:1. Evidence suggests that students who attend schools with ratios closer to the ASCA Model's recommendation are less likely to receive disciplinary referrals (S. E. Carrell & S. A. Carell, 2006). In a comprehensive study of Missouri schools, Lapan et al. (2012) correlate lower student to counselor ratios with higher graduation rates, lower disciplinary incident rates, and higher attendance rates. The study highlighted the fact that lower student to counselor ratios play a positive and influential role in promoting student academics especially in high poverty schools (as indicated by data with respect to students who qualified for free or reduced lunch). Additionally, Woods and Domina's (2014) findings support the claim that smaller school counselor caseloads might increase student access to college preparation and increase 4-year college enrollment rates. Lastly, Carey et al. (2012) found a more favorable student-to- school-counselor ratio was significantly associated with a higher attendance rate and a lower discipline rate.

The ASCA National Model and Comprehensive Counseling Programs

The ASCA National Standards (1997) for students serve as the foundation for what is currently known as the ASCA National Model. As Baker (2011) describes, the purpose of the National Standards is to:

> a) establish school counseling as an integral part of the academic mission of the schools, (b) provide equal access to school counseling services for all students, (c) highlight the key ingredients of developmental school counseling, (d) identify the knowledge and skills to which all students should have access from comprehensive school counseling programs, and (e) ensure comprehensive school counseling programs are delivered in a systematic manner. (p.108)

In summary, the purpose of the National Standards is to provide a baseline for counselors to equitably support student needs. The ASCA National standards function as a set of statements regarding what students should know and be able to do as a result of the services offered by school counselors. Student outcomes have been organized into three broad domains: academic development, career development, and personal/social development (Baker, 2011).

In 2005, following the publication of ASCA's National Standards for School Counseling came the ASCA National Model, the framework that has heavily influenced school counseling education and guidance programs. The ASCA National Model provides a framework for school counselors to deliver a comprehensive developmental guidance program and adds features such as management and accountability systems (e.g., mission statement, results reports) to a school's counseling program (Carey et al., 2012). The National Model has influenced state standards for school counseling significantly, and even before its publication, as many as 35 state departments of education or school counseling associations promoted the implementation of the

comprehensive school counselor model (Sink & McDonald, 1998).

The ASCA National Model is influential because of its breadth and depth. Rather than being simple, it promotes a comprehensive counseling program that includes:

1. Curriculum with lessons that meet the developmental needs of the student populations
2. Individual preparation to support students in creating meaningful plans that align with future career goals
3. Responsive services that support students with barriers to achieving goals
4. A system of support that allows counselors time to plan and carry out the guidance program, conduct program management and evaluation work, collaborate, and complete required administrative tasks

Hogan (1998) states that a comprehensive school counseling program is developmental, systematic, sequential, clearly defined, accountability driven, proactive, preventive, and aimed at helping students acquire and apply life-long learning skills. To summarize, comprehensive guidance programs are characterized by overarching organizational components with distinct elements, including structural and program components, collaboration with other resource personnel, and response to student needs (Gysbers & Henderson, 1994).

Studies on the ASCA National Model

Studies showing empirical data to support the implementation of the National ASCA Model are limited in quantity. However, Lapan (2012) completed a statewide study

including 236 schools in the state of Missouri by collecting student self-reported data and counselor responses to a 32-question survey. The study found that schools with more fully implemented guidance programs had positive effects on high school students' 1) grades, 2) preparation for future, 3) career and college resources, and 4) perceptions of school climate (Carrell, S. E. & Carrell, S. A., 2006). By using hierarchical linear modeling and controlling for demographic differences, Lapan et al. found that in schools with a more fully implemented comprehensive counseling program, students earned higher grades and were more likely to self-report positive feelings in regards to school climate and safety, and their preparation for college/career/future (Carey et al., 2012).

In response to the fact that only four rigorous quantitative evaluations of school counseling programs had been published, Carey et al. (2012) completed a study in the state of Utah. Notably, Carey et al. took careful consideration into the fact that most states have revised their state models to align with the ASCA National Model (Martin et al., 2009). As a result, through a statewide evaluation survey containing both descriptive and demographic items, Carey et al. focused on components of the ASCA National Model that impact student achievement (2012). The results found that the longer students were enrolled in high implementation comprehensive school counselor program schools, the more likely they were to take college entrance exams and score higher on standardized tests including the ACT and state testing exams.

Although the quantity of studies on comprehensive school counseling programs is small, the depth of each of the studies proves promising for schools with a more fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program. In addition, such studies

support programs that align with the ASCA National Model. There are definitive limitations to the literature that exists. The following will review such limitations.

Limitations of the ASCA Model and Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

The ASCA National Model is a framework for all counseling programs that support students in grades K-12. Although the ASCA National Model's breadth allows for flexibility and intention of implementing curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, the development needs are completely different at different age levels. A comprehensive counseling program that meets the developmental needs of high school students in the three domains of academic, career, and personal/social development may need to be more specific (Fye et al., 2018). Currently, there is limited literature that focuses on the ASCA National Model and its relationship to high school counseling programs (Mau et al., 2016). In addition, limited research (i.e., Mason, 2010) has focused on variables predicting school counselors' ability to implement the ASCA National Model (Fye et al., 2018). Studer et al. (2011) found significant differences in comprehensive program implementation in the areas of delivery between elementary and high school counselors, and accountability between elementary and middle school counselors. Though there is a significant amount of research regarding the implementation of the ASCA National Model at the elementary and middle school levels (Austin et al., 2017; Bruhn, 2017;

Doabler et al., 2019; Milburn et al., 2017), the focus of implementation specifically at the high school is nowhere near as robust (Alger & Luke, 2015; Lapan et al., 1997).

Multi-Tiered, Multi Domain System of Support and the ASCA National Model

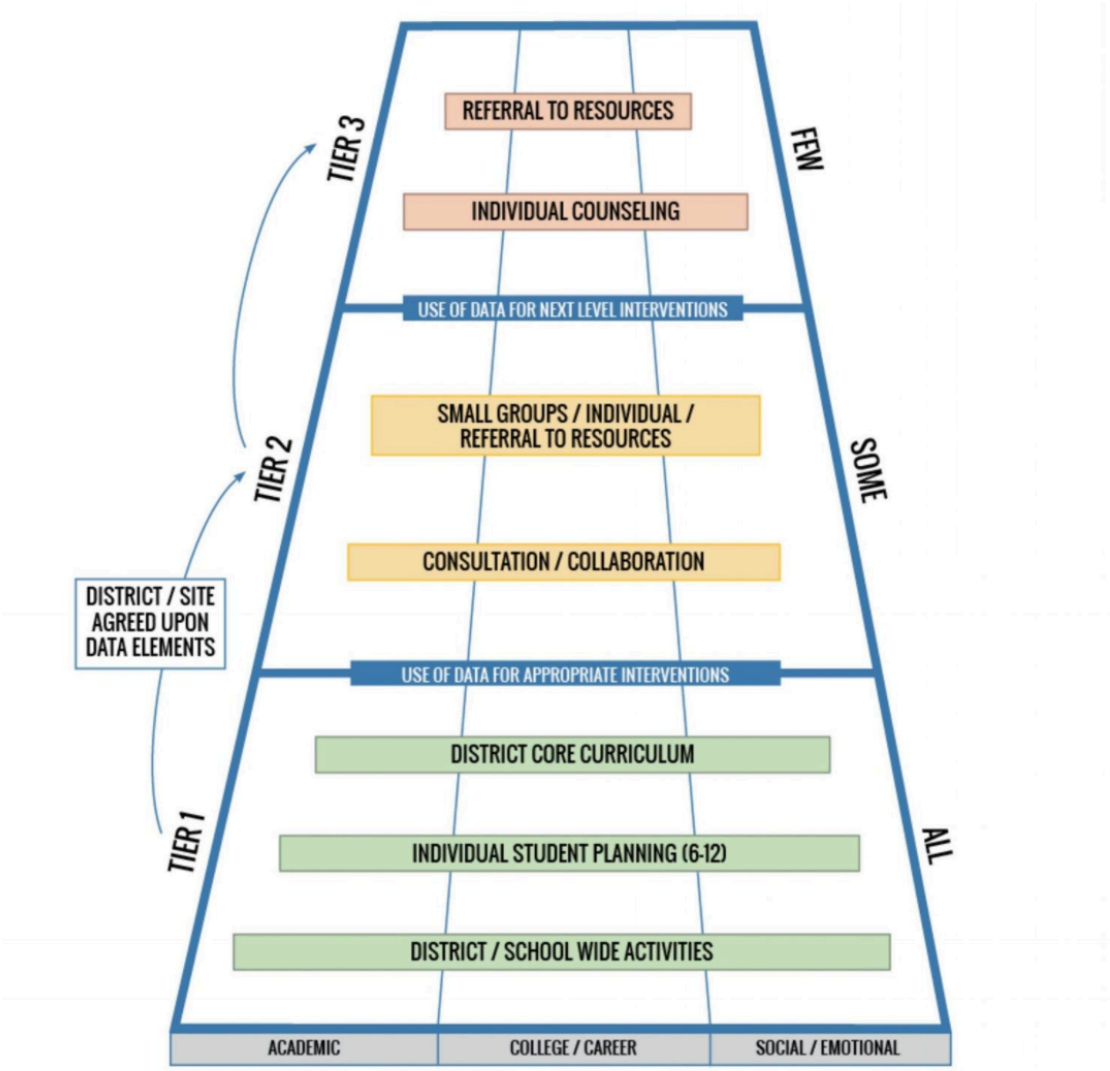
A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is a data-driven framework schools use to address academic concerns and problem behavior by utilizing both prevention and intervention strategies (Sugai & Horner, 2009). In 2007, Batsche introduced MTSS, based on the integration of Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) approaches (Averill et al., 2011). The MTSS model is systematic in nature, and organized in a way that meets the unique needs of any school. In an MTSS framework, students are divided into three tiered categories based on the level of risk and need: (a) Tier One represents students who are in the general education population and who are thriving, (b) Tier Two represents students who need slightly more intensive intervention that can be delivered both individually or in a small group setting, and (c) Tier Three represents students who need intensive individualized interventions (Ockerman et al., 2012). Although a MTSS model is often used as an overarching construct for Positive Behavior Intervention Strategy (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (RtI) to provide behavioral and social supports to all students based on their needs and skills (Cook et al., 2015; Harlacher et al., 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2009), the purpose of this study is to focus on MTSS in the context of comprehensive high school counseling programs. While MTSS is focused on two areas (academics and behavior), the focus of the work of the school counselor is in three domains: 1) academic, 2) college/career, and 3) social/emotional (Hatch, 2017).

Current research explores how the ASCA National Model and the MTSS framework can support the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program (Belser et al., 2016; Ziomak-Daigle & Goodman-Scott, 2016). Through the lens of MTSS, the

ASCA National Model promotes a comprehensive school counseling program in which Tier One curriculum is preventative in nature and delivered to all students, Tier Two interventions are responsive and provided to sub populations of students in need of additional support, and Tier Three interventions are individualized for students in crises. Approximately 80% of students in a school are successful while receiving the Tier One curriculum, the general academic and behavioral curriculum for all students (Ziomek-Daigle & Goodman-Scott, 2016). Students with elevated needs receive more specialized secondary and tertiary prevention, typically 15% and 5% of students, respectively (Harlacher et al., 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2009). School counselors are uniquely positioned to play a critical role in the implementation of such programs due to their training in data analysis, program development, and direct service delivery. MTSS programs align well with the ASCA National Model (Belser et al., 2016). In 2014, *The Use of Data in School Counseling: Hatching Results for Students, Programs, and the Profession* was published and introduced MTMDSS (Multi-Tiered, Multi Domain System of Support), a framework for school counselors merging MTSS with ASCA's three domains of 1) academic, 2) college/career, and 3) social/emotional support of students. In Figure 1 (Hatch, 2013), the three domains are set in columns and the three tiers of support are set in columns, illustrating graduated levels of supports.

Figure 1

Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Support.



Note. Taken from the Hatching results blog, Hatch, T. (2017).

Since the ASCA National Model is a framework for K-12 education, there exists limited research on how to implement the merging of the ASCA National Model and MTSS framework at the high school level. This merge is fairly new and a majority of studies on the effectiveness of MTMDSS has been limited. Borders and Drury (2001) assert that program development must be guided by systematic planning and proven practices, thus this study aims to learn of such practices for implementing a MTMDSS

framework at the high school level. Lee and Ekstrom (1987) investigated the equitability of counseling services and found that students from lower socioeconomic homes, rural areas, or minority families received less guidance counseling than did other students, and were less likely to be guided toward academic courses (Borders & Drury, 2001). The hope is that a systematic framework that merges MTSS and the ASCA National Model, MTMDSS, will support a school counseling program to address the needs of all students, especially those who need additional support.

A Focus on Tier Two

According to Ziomak-Daigle and Goodman-Scott (2016), MTSS aligns with the ASCA National Model's chief inputs of advocacy, collaboration, systemic change, prevention, intervention and the use of data. A tiered approach provides school counselors time to address whole-school needs while also providing services to and advocating on behalf of students in crisis or with significant needs (Ziomak-Daigle & Goodman-Scott, 2016). Specifically, Tier Two interventions allow school counselors to address achievement gaps and increase equitable practices by strengthening social supports for students who present challenging behavior and or are not meeting high school goals in academic, career, and social development. Furthermore, interventions of school counselors are an integral part of the mission to facilitate the success of all students (Scarborough & Luke, 2008).

The subpopulations of students who are categorized under Tier Two are specific to the school population. Studies have focused on low achieving students (Hong et al., 2012), students struggling with specific subject matter (Austin et al., 2017; Doabler et al.,

2019), students suffering from anxiety and or depression (Merrell, 2001), and students of color with problem behavior (Belser et al., 2016). This aforementioned list of students categorized under Tier Two is not comprehensive, but rather illustrates the variability of what types of Tier Two interventions might exist at a school. In addition, there exists a myriad of studies that focus on students who receive Tier Two interventions at the elementary and middle school levels (Austin et al., 2017; Doabler et al., 2019; Milburn et al., 2017), but the studies at the high school levels are limited. This study aims to discover how Tier Two groups are determined at the high school level and how such Tier Two interventions are implemented. A specific case can be made for studies at the high school level for two specific reasons: The first is that high school students' developmental needs differ from the needs of students at the middle school and elementary school levels. Second, the expectations of counselor duties and constraints on high school schedules are very different from those at the elementary and middle school levels. Findings on Tier Two interventions at the high school level may support current high school counselors within their practice of providing a comprehensive counseling program.

Tier Two Interventions

Students who have needs that are not being met by Tier One curriculum in a comprehensive school counseling program may need Tier Two interventions. Often, schools adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' approach for Tier Two interventions in which all identified students receive the same intervention regardless of the severity, behavioral function, or skill deficit (Stormont & Reinke, 2013). Unfortunately, this one-size-fits-all

method does not meet the varying needs of high school students. McDaniel et al. (2015) suggests schools use student data and teacher input to place students into a variety of readily available, research based, Tier Two interventions that address student specific needs. This study aims to understand what data school counselors use to identify students in the Tier Two category, and furthermore determine what and how Tier Two interventions are implemented to address the needs of students categorized under Tier Two.

Small Group Tier Two Interventions

Often, Tier Two interventions implemented by school counselors are direct services to students through small groups for minor problem behaviors (Belser et al., 2016). Small groups are psychoeducational in nature (e.g. anger management, social skills development, conflict resolution, problem solving) but can also be geared toward personal growth and address concerns about everyday problems and feelings (Gladding, 2016). Depending on the students, the group-based approach for delivering the intervention provides a perfect vehicle for peer modeling, social reinforcement, immediate feedback, and practice of new skills (Merrell, 2003). In addition, Tier Two interventions in a multi-tiered system of support are aligned with school wide Tier One expectations and procedures and can be easily accessed and implemented by teachers.

When students are not meeting academic standards, they are often identified by a cut off score or grade received. In Milburn, Lonigan, and Philips' (2017) study of preschool children, students qualified for Tier Two interventions in different strands of reading literacy if they scored at or below the 25th percentile on a domain assessment. As a result,

students who qualified for the intervention were placed in small groups of 4, and received additional instruction by trained educators for each strand of literacy in which they qualified. Similarly, Doabler et al. (2019) used cut off scores to determine math interventions for kindergarten students. Children who earned a score less than 20 on the Number Sense Brief *and* identified under the strategic or intensive ranges on the Assessing Student Proficiency in Early Number Sense (ASPENS) were placed into small groups of 2 or 5 to receive the math intervention. Thus, depending on the intervention being introduced, small groups can be an effective method in deciding how to implement interventions for students. Whether the intervention is academic, socio-emotional, or supports students' long-term goals, Tier Two interventions provide the more nuanced, specific supports that enable students identified in Tier Two to be as successful as peers not in need of interventions. Tier Two provides educators the opportunity to teach through a lens of equity.

Individual Tier Two Interventions

For students with needs that are not appropriate for specific counseling groups, or if a student's needs do not warrant a group, individual approaches to Tier Two interventions are necessary (Belser et al., 2016). Individual Tier Two interventions include, but are not limited to, a check-in/check-out model, cognitive behavioral treatments, and behavioral contracts (Belser et al., 2016). To protect the privacy of students, Tier Two interventions may be more suitable as individual interventions. For example, if a school counselor is supporting students with anxiety or depression, one-on-one discussions with a counselor may be more appropriate for the student. Similar to group interventions, individual Tier

Two interventions require ongoing monitoring of student progress so that decisions can be made about whether to continue, discontinue, or adapt interventions (Woods, 2017). When Tier Two interventions are monitored, a student's Tier Two interventions may be discontinued and students can revert to only receiving Tier One supports.

The Need for Tier Two Focus

Although the ASCA National Model recommends a ratio of 250 students for every 1 counselor, this recommendation is far from what public school systems in California, where ratios reach as high as 950 to one, can provide at the high school level. As resources are often limited, so is the number of counselors at each school site. To address this deficit, the MTMDSS approach aims to meet the needs of a majority of its students through the Tier One curriculum. For students whose needs are greater than what Tier One can provide, Tier Two students are identified and supported. However, even with the support from teachers, counselors may not be able to afford the time commitment that regular group counseling requires, and they may not be able to remove students from academic instruction (Merrell, 2003).

Barriers to implementing Tier Two interventions must also be considered and explored to support future counseling practices. In Kayler and Sherman's (2009) study, counselors who attempted to meet the needs of students by running group sessions during the day found that when students failed to attend school, the Tier Two interventions could not be successful. In addition to student attendance, accessing students during the day who are in attendance can also be challenging. When high school students are enrolled in multiple classes throughout the day, it is important for counselors to pay attention to

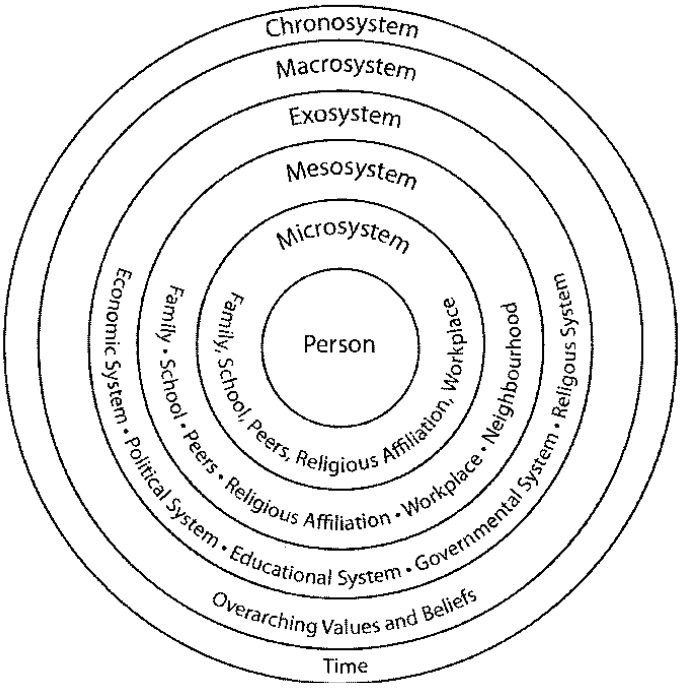
student schedules to prevent chronic absences from a single academic course, and/or be conscious of student time away from learning academic content. In high schools where academic demands are high, taking students out of class can increase the barriers to student achievement. Despite the fact that there is a myriad of individual Tier Two interventions that school counselors can implement, generally, most counseling programs implement only one or two interventions, and such interventions are unlikely to be matched to students' area of risk (Anderson & Borgmeier, 2010). By exploring how counselors determine which Tier Two groups to support, future counselors may have a better understanding of how to identify and support students in distress.

Theoretical Frameworks

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is a useful theoretical framework for understanding ecological systems and factors that influence student behavior and success (Harper, 2014). McMahon et al. (2014) assert that using an ecological perspective to better understand and inform the work that school counselors must do may be a useful next step in the ongoing transformation of school counseling and education. As shown in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model in Figure 2, schools are complex systems within other complex systems and subsystems.

Figure 2

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems



Note. According to this model, counselors are part of the schools, which influence both the microsystem and mesosystem of the individual. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979). Retrieved from Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice (2016).

Bronfenbrenner's approach helps to understand the relationships between counselors and students, as well as the students' environment at varying levels. As cited in Martinello (2019), this model recognizes that children develop with a broader culture, one with multiple, interacting variables, reflecting an opportunity for intervention across multiple tiers, ensuring that approaches are 'culturally and developmentally appropriate' (Harper et al., 2014; Padila et al., 2010). School counselors interact with individual students, parents, and teachers, and often health professionals, whom are all within a student's microsystem and mesosystem.

Ecological Systems Theory, alone, would not suffice as the sole theoretical framework in this study because it lacks a social justice lens. Therefore, we also use a Critical Systems Theory approach, that allows us to explore how school counselors can be integral figures in addressing inequities in education. The critical lens on Systems Theory is essential to considering the social considerations through which a school system exists (Jackson, 1994). According to Ventir and Goede (2018), critical systems thinking embraces pluralism, that is, the idea that different methodologies, from different paradigms, can be applied during different phases of interventions to enrich the ultimate solution. This notion of applying Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, coupled with the critical social lens, is how stakeholders can effectively support a school system with its unique populations and needs. According to Goodman-Scott, Betters-Bubon, and Donohue (2016), school counselors must be multiculturally competent social justice advocates, removing barriers impacting student academic success, and promoting equity and access (ASCA, 2012; Grothaus & Johnson, 2012). In addition, it is crucial that counselors take a data driven approach driven by a lens on equity (ASCA, 2012). As there is an increase in the inequities that students face, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems and critical systems theories, combined, serve as a vehicle for which such inequities can be addressed to provide support necessary for students to achieve equitable outcomes.

ASCA National Model and MTMDSS

The conceptual framework of this study marries the ASCA National Model and the MTSS model to become an overarching guide for implementing a comprehensive high school counseling program, which leads to a Multi-Tiered Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS) model. By focusing on the approaches that high school counselors take in applying such models to support their students in need, clarity can be gained regarding the school counselor role, and how the high school counselor mitigates meeting the needs of a high volume of students. According to the American School Counselor Association (2020), the ASCA National Model guides school counselors in the development of school counseling programs that:

- are based on data-informed decision making
- are delivered to all students systematically
- include a developmentally appropriate curriculum focused on the mindsets and behaviors all students need for postsecondary readiness and success
- close achievement and opportunity gaps
- result in improved student achievement, attendance, and discipline

Drawing from the ASCA National Model, school counselors provide curriculum to students in three domains: academic, socio-emotional, and college & career planning. Under the MTMDSS model, the curriculum that is created and meant for all students to receive is known as Tier One curriculum. When students are not meeting academic milestones, are experiencing barriers to achievement, or simply need more than what the Tier One curriculum can provide, students may be identified as Tier Two students. In an

effort to support students in an equitable manner, counselors may provide Tier Two interventions and support. As the needs of students vary, this study aims to explore how counselors determine Tier Two groups and how Tier Two interventions are implemented and monitored. The Tier Two group is the second and an essential component of a MTMDSS. Students are considered Tier Two before intensive Tier Three interventions and resources are applied to support students in crisis. Overall, a comprehensive counseling program that supports Tier One, Tier Two, and Tier Three students in the academic, socio-emotional, and college & career planning domains is what can be identified as a Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Support (MTMDSS).

California State Standards and Requirements

High school counselors are expected to maintain a level of professionalism outlined by the California State Standards for School Counselors. These standards overlap significantly with the ASCA National Model and are specific to the professionals in the state of California. In addition, the California public school system requires that school counselors hold a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Credential. In general, California State Standards for School Counselors are embedded into the curriculum required for one to earn a PPS Credential. Note that in 2019, after this study concluded, the California State Standards were revised and now include explicit language pertaining to multi-tiered systems of support that will be implemented in training programs beginning in 2022.

In order to support California high school students and successfully implement an MTMDSS model, high school counselors have to support the academic needs of students. A large component of this academic support is ensuring that students are, first and

foremost, meeting the California high school graduation requirements and second, encouraging students to meet University of California/California State University A-G Requirements. These two components are huge driving factors in accountability measures for California high schools. In addition, both measures are used to gauge the academic achievement of students on the new California Dashboard (California Department of Education, 2019). Therefore, embedded in comprehensive high school counseling programs is a school counselor's knowledge of California's academic standards at both the high school and college entrance levels.

Educational Stakeholders

There exist people beyond teachers, counselors, and parents who care about educating young people. Parents, members of the community, district office officials, staff members, administrators, and counselors are what we refer to as educational stakeholders. Often, these individuals are part of decision-making bodies at school sites such as members of a Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) or school site councils/school advisory boards. Often these members support the efforts of teachers and counselors in providing the conditions that make it possible to educate students.

Educational stakeholders can raise concerns through various methods. For example, members of the PTSA can raise concerns about a school's diminishing performance in mathematics or district personnel raise concerns about the number of students in a school district not meeting California A-G requirements. Once these concerns are raised, it is up to school leadership to find ways to address concerns, monitor interventions, and be transparent with educational stakeholders. A comprehensive counseling model includes

the collaboration and communication with its stakeholders, including students, parents, educators, community members, and educational leaders.

Student/Parent/Family Needs

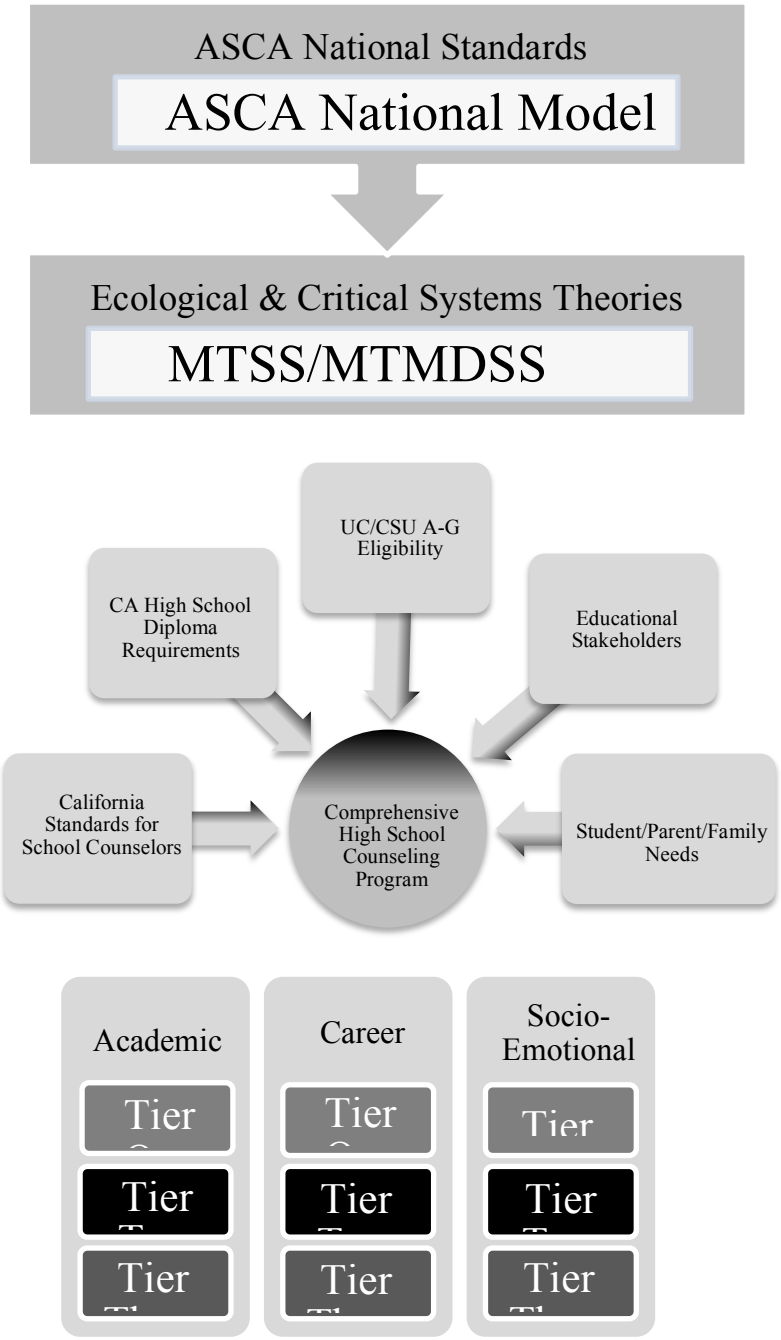
Beyond supporting student needs on an academic level, high school counselors are expected to support student's socio-emotional development, and preparation for college and career. MTMDSS and California State Standards for school counselors provide a framework for counselors to focus their work. One of the key components of both of these frameworks is to provide various levels of support for students and families. Comprehensive counseling programs offer guidance to both students and parents at varying levels. Counselors function as first responders to students in crisis, as well as at Tier One, Two, and Three.

Comprehensive Counseling Program

In Figure 3, California standards for school counselors, California high school diploma requirements, UC/CSU eligibility requirements, educational stakeholders, and student/family needs are all major components that contribute to a complex, comprehensive counseling program.

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework



Note. Figure 3 has been created to illustrate how the ASCA National standards provide a foundation for the ASCA National Model and how Ecological Systems and Critical Systems Theories provide a foundation for a MTMDSS.

These two frameworks are the overarching components of a comprehensive high school counseling program that is also influenced by the California standards for school counseling, California high school graduation requirements, college eligibility requirements (CSU/UC A-G requirements), educational stakeholders, and student/family needs. The comprehensive high school counseling program supports students in three domains: academic, career, and socio-emotional learning. The study focuses on how counselors identify Tier Two groups and implement Tier Two interventions. The study aims to explore how the demands on the school counselor, school population, and the implementation of a comprehensive counseling program (The ASCA National Model with MTMDSS framework) all work together to lead counselors in the identification of Tier Two groups and interventions to support all students in an equitable manner.

The systems theories that provide the foundation for this conceptual framework are evidenced in the practice of applying both the ASCA National Model and a MTMDSS approach. The MTMDSS model is grounded in the notion of equity and providing additional services to students who demonstrate need. The research questions that guided this study are:

RQ 1: What factors in a counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions?

RQ 2: How do high school counselors in a Silicon Valley high school district, with large student to counselor ratios, determine Tier Two groups?

RQ3: Beyond identifying Tier Two groups in need, how do high school counselors in one high school district implement and monitor Tier Two interventions?

Conclusion

The literature shows that although the National ASCA National Model provides a comprehensive recommendation for the role of the school counselor, the role of the school counselor has remained unclear among many stakeholders including parents, students, and administrators. In addition, high school counselors are challenged with the task of providing counseling services to a large volume of students. To address these components, this study aims to examine the application of both the ASCA National Model and the Multi-Tiered Multi Domain Systems of Support, with focused attention on Tier Two identification and interventions. Results of the study may clarify a major component of the counselor role that helps to mitigate large caseloads and provide equitable outcomes for all students in a high school.

Chapter 3: Methodologies

Chapter 3 focuses on the methods by which the researcher conducted this study. The chapter begins by restating the purpose of the study and proceeds to disclose information about the researcher including her epistemology and her context in this study. Information about participants and research design will be described in detail. The chapter concludes with the positionality of the researcher.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The role of the school counselor varies from school to school in the Silicon Valley High School District. Supporting students equitably is a challenge that high school counselors across the district (and nation) face. Implementing a comprehensive counseling program that simultaneously incorporates a multi-tiered system of support is a way that counselors can assure that students' needs are being met, especially when counselors face large caseloads. To address these high ratios, counselors are encouraged to implement both the ASCA National Model and a Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Support (MTMDSS). MTSS, from with MTMDSS is derived, includes 3 tiers, where a Tier One system provides services to *all* students, a Tier Two system provides services to some students, and a Tier Three system provides support to students in crisis and in need of individual attention. The implementation of MTMDSS may differ from site to site, and this study aims to identify what factors contribute to a counselors' capacity to implement Tier Two interventions, as well as how such interventions are chosen, implemented, and monitored. This chapter will review details about the researcher, the participants, and the methodology used in this study.

This dissertation describes a case study of one high school district's comprehensive counseling programs, with specific attention to how each high school implements Tier Two interventions modeled after both ASCA National Model and a Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Support. The research of this study is guided by the following questions:

RQ 1: What factors in a counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions?

RQ 2: How do high school counselors in a Silicon Valley high school district, with large student to counselor ratios, determine Tier Two groups?

RQ3: Beyond identifying Tier Two groups in need, how do high school counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District implement and monitor Tier Two interventions? To reach conclusions about counselor practices with respect to Tier Two interventions, guided by the drive to bring equity to educational experiences for all students, the researcher has decided to utilize case study research methods (Stake, 1995). The study will examine the various experiences of counselors in one high school district, as well as the practices of these counselor participants, to determine how the district's counseling programs support students identified as Tier Two.

About the Researcher

The following section focuses on the researcher of the study. It will discuss the epistemology of the researcher as well as the context of the researcher in this study. These two components support the reader in understanding the motivations that drive this research and provide the lens through which the researcher is had conducted this study.

Epistemology of the Researcher

As the youngest in a family full of immigrants, being a strong, productive student was always valued. Prior to their immigration to the United States, my mother was only able to attend school through second grade, and my father through sixth grade. Growing up, my parents ensured that my sisters and I valued the free education that was afforded to us. Raised in both East and South San Jose, it was clear to my peers that we were not part of the middle class, but rather, our families were considered 'low-income.' I envied the few students I knew whose families were able to afford extracurricular activities that posed a cost to parents such as dance, softball, or piano. After school, most of my peers and I participated in the free activities that school provided, or spent time at each other's homes either unsupervised or with an elder grandparent who lived in the home. Having additional opportunities outside of what our public school could provide was seldom an option.

As my peers and I navigated middle and high school, we leaned on each other and on older siblings since our parents had little involvement in our academic and social endeavors. We knew going to college was going to support our futures, but in hindsight, we were all planning for college rather aimlessly. My peers who took school seriously took advantage of the fact that we were considered low income and were able to apply to four California State Universities and four University of California institutions free of charge. We were happy to not have to ask our parents for funds we knew they did not have. We applied to state institutions knowing they were going to be more affordable and were not trained on how to research academic programs, look for support services, or

identify majors that related to careers. I recall choosing a major in mathematics because out of all the subjects I studied in school, mathematics was the subject that I found easiest. Math was not necessarily the most interesting, but it was the subject I could most tolerate.

When I began my studies at the university level, I began to slowly learn about economic advantages and privileges other students had. I felt like my peers were 'ahead' because their families were able to afford additional lessons, test preparation classes, and experiences that my family and high school peers did not. When I began my studies to become a teacher, I learned more about the inequities among different high schools and realized that I attended a high school that would be perceived as "challenging" and as a school with very few resources. When I was in high school I did not notice this disadvantage. My experiences were so limited to what was in arms' reach, and I was only exposed to other, similar high schools in the East Side Union High School District.

Now in my thirteenth year in education, I have had exposure and experience that covers a range from the most challenging communities of south Los Angeles to working in one of the highest performing school districts in the nation. The reality of the inequity in opportunities for students is glaring. As a school counselor I find it incredibly challenging to support students who fly under the radar and continually wonder how I can provide opportunities that help level the playing field for all students. I know this is a huge task, but as a first-generation student I am highly motivated to try.

Reflecting on my current practice as a school counselor, I am able to develop curriculum guided by the ASCA National Model with my colleagues. As a team, we are

confidently able to work with our teacher colleagues and provide classroom lessons that are supportive, engaging, and beneficial to all students. With high caseloads, when we are not managing our seasonal tasks, we are prepared to support students in crisis as well as those that need more individualized attention. Missing in my practice was support for students who needed more than the general curriculum, but were not necessarily in crisis. I seek to find ways to implement interventions for students that might greatly benefit from additional support to make their educational experience more equitable to that of their peers.

Context of Researcher and Study

As the primary student researcher, I hold four California credentials (Teaching: Single Subject Mathematics, Pupil Personnel Services: School Counseling, Pupil Personnel Services: Child Welfare and Attendance, and Administrative: Tier One). I have been a California educator since 2008, with 13 years of work experience. Prior to being employed as a school counselor, I worked as a high school math teacher for 6 years in South Los Angeles. I have a wide range of experiences with various high schools spanning both northern and southern California. Currently, I am employed by the same high school district as the one in this study.

As a researcher, I am familiar with the attitudes and cultural norms of the population that the high school district serves. The high school district is in the heart of the Silicon Valley and serves a diverse population of students and families including English language learners, students with special needs, students from low socio-economic

backgrounds, students from middle class families, and students whose parents are well educated and work in Silicon Valley's tech industry.

As the researcher, I note that I am an employee of the same high school district as my interviewees. However, I do not hold a supervisory or administrative role. Rather, I am a peer and colleague to the participants. My role is to complete interviews and ethnographic observations, then analyze and synthesize all data collected to determine patterns and draw conclusions with regard to how counselors identify Tier Two subpopulations and implement interventions. In addition, my role is to complete components that meet the requirements for a dissertation and coursework for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership in an ethical, unbiased manner (Creswell, 2008).

In order to maintain the highest level of ethical research and report without bias, it is essential that I identify my cultural background as a first generation, Vietnamese-American (Asian-American) minority female who was raised in an economically disadvantaged household, and now identifies as part of the middle working class. My epistemology as an educator includes background and experience in various progressive school environments in both urban south Los Angeles, CA and suburban San Jose, CA. These experiences may impact the work, even if done so subconsciously (Kezar, 2003; Milner, 2007). In order to promote credibility and trustworthiness of the study, I committed to establishing trust, practicing empathy, and demonstrating care with all colleagues who were interviewed.

Participants

Participants are an essential component of this study. Without them, the researcher would have been unable to collect qualitative data pertinent to this study. The following sections describe the context behind the participants in the study, details about the participants, and how the researcher elicited their participation.

Participant Context

The study focuses on the 5 different counseling programs that are part of the Silicon Valley High School District. Implementing the ASCA National Model is supported by the District, and specific District concerns are the focus that guide counseling programs (Carey et al., 2005). Therefore, the school counselors planning and implementing services for the students in the Silicon Valley High School District are the most informed regarding the study's focus. In addition, the counselors are directly involved in the decision making for how student subpopulations are determined and how services for such subpopulations are implemented. Two counselors from each of the five high schools in the district, for a total of ten high school counselors, were recruited to participate. According to Rapley (2004), interviewees can speak as individuals, as representatives of institutions or organizations or professions, as members of specific gendered, racialized, sexualized categories, as well as thoughtful individuals, feeling individuals, experiencing individuals, etc (p. 29). Thus, the two counselors from each school were interviewed to obtain a more comprehensive description of each of the counseling programs at each school site. The study aimed to include a diverse pool of counselors with respect to age, identified gender, ethnic background, and years of experience. Individuals who are not

school counselors of the Silicon Valley High School District were excluded from this study.

The study is based out of the cities of San Jose and Sunnyvale. The researcher and all participants of the study are colleagues that work for the same employer. Interviews with ten counselors showcase the variation of counseling programs and practices within one district.

Counselor Participants

According to Carey, Harrity and Dimmit (2005), ideally, an ASCA National Model implementation occurs at a district level and district specific concerns are a focus. In alignment with this ideal, the ten participants chosen are professional public high school counselors that belong to the same high school district. Of the ten counselors in the study, eight identify as women and two identify as men. Participants self-identify in a wide range of ethnic backgrounds including Caucasian American (4), Hispanic/Latino (3), Asian American (2), and Portuguese (1), with ages ranging from 33 to 43. The counselors' years of experience vary between three and nineteen years, and as a result, training experiences of counselors also greatly range.

Prior to entering the field of school counseling, a number of participants worked in fields outside the scope of school counseling. One participant worked in public relations for two years and was a high school teacher for eight years. Another participant worked as a paraeducator and basketball coach for 6 years before becoming a testing coordinator. A different participant worked as an administrative secretary at a local community college before entering the high school counseling profession. All participants completed

their Pupil Services Credential in California. Currently, participant caseloads range from approximately 500 to 630.

Counselor Recruitment

Target participants for this group included counselors who work in the same Silicon Valley high school district, who represent a wide range of: ethnicities, professional experience prior to high school counseling, counseling preparation programs, and years of experience in high school counseling. Participants were recruited in person and or via email from September 2019 through December 2019. Participants were informed of the study ahead of time and were invited to participate. Counselors were provided information describing the study and an informed consent letter before they were asked to complete a pre-interview intake survey. Once informed consent and completed intake surveys were received, the primary researcher communicated with each participant in person, via email, or via telephone to schedule interviews that accommodated each participant's schedule. (See Appendix 1 for the verbiage used to recruit participants.)

Research Design

Before interviewing counselors, the interview protocol was tested with trusted colleagues in both the Educational Leadership program at San José State as well as with colleagues who work as school counselors in the same district. This practice was conducted to determine if interview questions would elicit the responses needed to inform the study. From this practice testing, the wording of questions was adjusted to maximize the data and information gathered through interviews. Appendix 2. Research Design

illustrates the research methods, planned activities, and instruments needed to collect data for this study.

Pre-Interview Intake Survey

After eliciting participation, participants were able to ask the researcher clarifying questions via email, telephone, and or in person. Participants completed a pre-interview intake survey where written consent was obtained. The pre-interview intake survey was designed to obtain background information on participants. Questions asked gender, age, ethnic background, years of experience in counseling and non-counseling work, institution where counseling training was received, years of experience at high schools outside of the counselors' current high school, years of experience at current high school, volume of caseload, whether or not counselors are responsible for supporting students with special needs, whether or not counselors are responsible for supporting English Language Learners, and asked counselors to rate their level of familiarity with the ASCA National Model. The pre-interview intake was emailed to participants using a Google form.

Interviews

Prior to the interview, written and verbal consent was obtained from participants. Interview questions were designed with respect to the three research questions of this study. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. All participants agreed to be audio-recorded and were interviewed between 45 to 60 minutes each. Each interview was audio-recorded with two recording devices. Recordings were transcribed using an automated transcription service. Participants were given pseudonyms to ensure

confidentiality. Lastly, this study was designed and nine out of ten interviews were conducted prior to the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in March of 2020. As a result, interview questions do not reflect counseling practices in terms of remote learning.

Although administering surveys seemed like an efficient way of gaining information from high school counselors, interviews provided more comprehensive responses. From interviews, we gain coherence, depth, and density of the material that individual respondents provide (Weiss, 1995). Specifically, interviews that sacrifice uniformity of questioning to achieve fuller development of information are *qualitative* interviews (Weiss, 1995). The method of interviews is precisely intentional. According to Rapley (2004), interviews are social encounters where speakers collaborate in producing retrospective accounts of their actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts. As a counselor and interviewer, the notion of collaboration is essential for supporting a district wide comprehensive school counseling model.

Nine out of ten interviews took place in person between September 2019 and January 2020, prior to school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The last interview was conducted via Zoom in April 2020. All interviews were scheduled depending on when the participant and researcher were mutually available. Once the participant agreed, the researcher called the participant via telephone to answer any questions, and emailed the pre-interview intake survey, which included written consent.

When setting up the interviews, times of the school year at which interviews were requested were carefully considered. In the high school counseling role, there exists certain seasons that are busier than others. The busier ‘seasons’ were avoided to decrease

the strain a counselor may have felt about giving up their personal time. In addition, attention was considered for the time of day at which interviews were conducted. It was essential to not choose a time when a counselor could have felt rushed or restricted on time, to avoid a diminishing effect on responses.

The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is extremely important and can determine the quality of the interview. In addition, the structure of the interview and interview questions can determine the depth of responses. It was essential for the rapport to be strong in order for interviewees to feel comfortable and transparent. According to Freebody (2003), semi-structured interviews begin with a predetermined set of questions, but allow some latitude in the breadth of relevance. If the interview was too structured, the interviewee may not have been able to share something outside of the scope of questions asked. As a colleague of the counselors that were interviewed, interviewing was chosen as a method of research because of the rapport that was previously established. Considerations to interviewing included social order, individual differences, and human and cultural development (Freebody, 2003). As their colleague, the researcher was able to recognize the times during the school year at which an interview would be most appropriate and the researcher has a strong foundational understanding of how much time counselors can provide. Using a series of structured questions set a strong foundation for the semi-structured interview. The semi structure was crucial because there were factors specific to a high school's population, counseling team, or constraints that differ from what the researcher might have considered.

Prior to conducting interviews, it was pertinent to set up a structured set of questions

that would draw the conclusions sought in this study. Attention to wording and order of questions that allowed the participants to respond thoughtfully and transparently, and answer questions regarding the development of Tier Two groups was essential. In addition, the researcher was equally prepared to allow the interview to go into tangents and was prepared to bring the interview back to focus if the responses digressed into a completely different topic.

The researcher traveled to each participant's school to conduct the interview and review the context of the study prior to initiating questions. Interviews were semi-structured with an interview protocol created based on qualitative interview theories (Freebody, 2003; Weiss, 1995). Participants answered the questions posed by the researcher. Questions included how counselors decided to become school counselors, training, philosophy of working with students and sub-populations, pros and cons of the counseling role, and descriptions of site-specific comprehensive counseling programs. Following each interview, field notes by the researcher were recorded. Appendix 4. Interview Protocol represents the interview protocol used to guide each of the counselor interviews.

Field Notes

Following interviews, researchers can jot down comprehensive records to help jog their memory, known as field notes. The researcher must set time aside after a research activity and turn recollections and jottings into detailed written accounts that will preserve experiences as much as possible (Emerson et al., 1995). If time for writing field notes is not designated ahead of time, the longer the researcher waits to write the field

notes following participation/observation, the more the researcher risks forgetting nuanced details and accounts. When considering ethnographic field notes, it is essential to consider that no researcher can be a completely neutral, detached observer, independent of what is observed (Pollner & Emerson, 1988). Researchers bring in their own biases and experiences into their interpretation of what is observed. Furthermore, as long as the researcher is involved, the researcher carries 'consequential presence' that may ultimately affect how members talk and behave (Emerson et al., 1995).

Although there are many implications to consider when selecting field notes as a method of qualitative research, ethnographic field notes are an appropriate method for this study. Field notes served a purpose in two different capacities. First, by observing counselors in their professional setting, notes were taken regarding a counselor's interactions with colleagues while determining and planning for Tier Two groups. Second, field notes were completed following interviews with counselors. The field notes for the former research activity directly address research question 2: How do high school counselors implement Tier Two interventions? Field notes for the latter activity support research questions 2 and 3 of this study.

Following each interview, 30-45 minutes were set aside to record field notes. Recording notes during interviews was avoided so as to not distract participants and disrupt the flow of the actual interviews. According to Emerson et al. (1995), writing field notes requires a block of concentrated time, and every hour spent observing requires an additional hour to write up (p. 39). Timing and scheduling were of the utmost importance when scheduling times to interview and write field notes. Lastly, like

interview transcriptions, field notes needed to be reread, reviewed, and coded, to draw conclusions that addressed the research questions. When follow up questions were needed, the participants were contacted accordingly via email.

Coding

In his chapter on Interviews, Rapley (2004) asserts that interviews need to be read, and re-read over and over in order to draw themes, apply codes, and analyze data. Analyzing and coding interview transcripts helps draw answers to the research questions in this study. Saldana (2011) defines

> a code in qualitative data analysis is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language based or visual data. The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, literature, etc. (p. 95-96)

According to Freebody (2018), aspects of interviewee's practices that prove to be common or prevalent across all counselors cannot be determined in advance. Therefore, diligent focus to review all transcriptions and field notes have been essential to the reliability of this study.

Interview recordings were transcribed and coded with key words and phrases. Reviewing the transcriptions multiple times allowed the researcher to draw conclusions among all interviews conducted in this case study. By using different colors for different systems in which counselors *identify* students, as well as different colors for ways in which counselors *implement* Tier Two interventions, the researcher was able to draw conclusions among recurring words and themes. In addition, by identifying codes, other

methods of how counselors determine Tier Two groups that were not considered prior to interviews were identified.

Documents

According to Prior (2004), documents are interactional in nature because they have content that is analyzed by its reader. However, another component for consideration is how documents are compiled and furthermore, how they are circulated. All of these interactional and tangential components of documents are what provide the rich context for why documents have been chosen as a qualitative research method for this study.

It was predicted that documents might include queries for how counselors identify students, such as a semester grade spreadsheet of students earning low grades, flyers that counselors create to advertise and recruit for support groups, literature, curriculum, and or resources counselors uses to create presentations, and lastly, presentation slides that counselors use with Tier Two groups. All documents outlined above might have provided a clearer understanding for the process at which counselors identify and implement interventions for Tier Two groups.

Actual documents identified in this study included queries for how counselors identified subpopulations, and spreadsheets used to keep track of students and data. Documents that were not found or used include flyers, curriculum, and presentation slides. Through the analysis of documents that were created by various counseling departments, coupled with the responses to interview questions provided by counselors, answers to how school counselors implement Tier Two interventions have been found. For example, it was predicted that a 'DFI report' is used as a filter used by counselors to

identify students in need of academic support. Analyzing this document provided clear details on grade level, subject area, teacher, etc., that were not discussed during the interview.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope and limitations provide context into the parameters of this study. The study focuses on how school counselors at the Silicon Valley High School District identify subpopulations of students to support, and how counselors deliver targeted interventions. A single researcher who also functions as a school counselor for the same school district conducted the interviews.

Limitations of this study include the number of interviews and field notes taken by the researcher. The total number of interviews conducted was limited due to differences in counselors' schedules. Additionally, because the researcher also functions as a counselor in the same high school district, the perceived positionality of the interviewees may have affected the amount of information shared. Some counselors may have felt very comfortable sharing their counseling practices, while others may have felt more reserved. The interview responses were limited to the interview questions designed by the researcher.

Limitations of the study also include the training in which counselors have received in both their explicit school counseling programs, and through professional development while working as high school counselors. Prior to working in this district, many counselors did not receive training with respect to the ASCA model or with a lens on MTMDSS. Therefore, some of these counselors may not explicitly follow the ASCA and

or MTMDSS model. However, this does not preclude these counselors from identifying subpopulations of students for which they support. In addition, this does not preclude counselors from sharing *how* they support their identified subpopulations.

Furthermore, two counselors from five different high schools in this Silicon Valley High School District were interviewed, resulting in approximately 50% of total counselors in the district. Since the study is limited to the counselors who work for this high school district, the number of male counselors interviewed is significantly lower than the number of female counselors. Counselors were interviewed throughout the school year, depending on counselor time and availability. Meeting at different times in the school calendar year might have affected the ways in which counselors were able to identify student subpopulations to support. For example, a counselor interviewed in the beginning of the school year might not have known that a subpopulation of students needed support dealing with a crisis that occurred later in the school year. Thus, counselors were only able to predict potential Tier Two groups and speak on behalf of how current counseling programs function to support predicted groups.

As counselors were all part of the same school district, the study was limited to the populations in which the district serves. Therefore, the study does not include the support of students living in rural locations nor at small high schools, and does not include a majority of students who identify as socio-economically disadvantaged. Counselors ensured that student confidentiality remained secure and were limited to the information that could be shared with the researcher.

Assumptions and Positionality of Researcher in the Study

The researcher developed rapport with participants/colleagues, which created reciprocally respectful relationships. For participants with similar experience and age to the researcher, any intimidation participants might have felt if they were interviewed by someone with more experience is not a concern. However, the researcher is younger than most participants. Therefore, the researcher was careful about how questions were phrased to show aptitude as a counselor and to not threaten the work of a counselor who is seasoned and comfortable in their practice. As the group of participants was diverse in terms of ethnicity and experiences, the researcher's race and socioeconomic status should not have been a significant factor in the interview process.

As a school counselor conducting interviews with colleagues across the same district, and as a member of the Guidance Study Group, it was crucial for the researcher to be explicit about the goal of the interviews. The Guidance Study Group functions as a focus group of counselors who initiate changes to the district counseling program. Counselors who agreed to be interviewed understood that interview responses would not be shared with the Guidance Study Group, but instead support the studies of the researcher pursuing doctoral candidacy in Educational Leadership. As the researcher is part of the Guidance Study Group, some participants might have perceived the interview as a way to collect data for the district. The researcher was responsible for assuring participants that responses were used solely for the purposes of this study, and would not directly affect counselor roles and responsibilities at the district level. Responses to interview questions

were removed if a counselor felt that the response might have directly affected future changes in their role as a counselor in the school district.

As the researcher in this dissertation study, I note that I am an employee of the same high school district as my interviewees. However, I do not hold a supervisory or administrative role. Rather, I am a peer and colleague to the interviewees. My role was to complete interviews and field notes, then analyze and synthesize all data collected to determine patterns and draw conclusions with regard to how counselors identify Tier Two subpopulations and implement interventions. In addition, my role was to complete components that meet the requirements for a dissertation, which is part of the requirements of a doctoral degree in educational leadership, in an ethical, unbiased manner (Creswell, 2008).

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this descriptive case study is to explore the factors that affect counselors' implementation of Tier Two interventions in the Silicon Valley High School District. Data from 10 different counselors in the same high school district was collected through initial in-take surveys, one-on-one interviews, and post-interview follow up questions. 90% of interviews were conducted prior to March 2020, when Covid-19 forced in person school closures throughout California. This study began in 2019, when a gap in literature was revealed regarding how counselors implement interventions as they are described in the MTMDSS framework and ASCA National Model. Counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District serve a broad range of students, and there is a need for providing support for counselors to implement strategies to support these students.

Examining what contributes to counselors' propensity to implement interventions, as well as how counselors determine what subpopulations to support leads to stronger understandings of how to train and support school counselors, which lead to more clear-cut interventions for students. Prior to this study, the factors that contribute to a counselor's capacity to implement interventions was not known. In addition, the methods by which counselors determine students in need of intervention and implement interventions was unclear.

The findings for this study were guided by the following research questions:

1. What factors in a counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions?

2. How do counselors in a Silicon Valley high school district determine Tier Two groups? What are the tools and instruments used to identify sub groups/subpopulations of students that need or would benefit from additional support? What are the Tier Two groups? What data drives the identification of these groups?
3. Beyond Identifying Tier Two groups in need, how do counselors implement a Tier Two system of support? How do counselors manage schedule conflicts and limited time constraints that are inherent in supporting large caseloads of students?

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the aforementioned forms of data collection.

Professional School Counselor Participants

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the demographic and professional characteristics of the participants in this study.

Table 1

Counselor Participant Demographics and Statistics

	Number	Percentage
	(n)	**(%)**
Identified Gender		
Female	8	80%
Male	2	20%
Age Group		
25-33	1	10%
34-40	4	40%
41-50	5	50%
Racial/Ethnic Background		
White/Caucasian	4	40%
Hispanic/Latino	3	30%
Asian	2	20%
Other (Portuguese)	1	10%
Years of Experience as Counselor		
6 to 10 years	7	70%
16 to 20 years	3	30%

Note. The average years of experience of counselors is 10.1 years. All participants worked full time in the Silicon Valley High School District.

High School Profiles

Participating school counselors in this study represent all 5 high schools in district.

Table 2. includes the demographic make-up during the 2019-20 school year.

Table 2

Campus Demographics 2019-2020

Student Enrollment	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C	Campus D	Campus E
	Number (n)				
	1922	2267	2430	2028	2058
Demographics	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C	Campus D	Campus E
	Percentage (%)				
Asian	87%**	73%	46%	80%	33%
Chinese	41%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asian Indian	32%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Korean	5%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Japanese	2%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other Asian/ Filipino	7%	NA	3%	.8%	1%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	9.2%	15%	3.4%	39%
White not Hispanic/ Caucasian	7%	11%	26%	10	19%
African American	NA	.88%	1%	0.6%	1%
Other (Nat. Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	4%	.13%	2%	NA	1%
Native American)	NA	NA	1%	.3%	NA
Two or more races	NA	5.6%	6%	5.2%	6%

Note. Information derived directly from School Profiles published on each campus' respective school website. ** The sum of all students at Campus A who could also be classified as Asian.

Table 3 and Table 4 present data specific to each campus' graduating class of 2020. Table 3 presents the Grade Point Averaged distribution for the class of 2020 and Table 4 represents the class's post high school destinations.

Table 3

GPA Distribution by Campus, Graduating Class of 2020

	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C	Campus D	Campus E
Class Size	Number (n)				
	436	548	605	572	577
GPA Scale	Number (n) Percentage (%)				
4.0	59 (13.5%)	NA	53 (9%)	52 (9%)	26 (4.5%)
3.76-4.0	NA	204 (37.2%)	NA	NA	NA
3.5-3.99	265 (60.8%)	NA	264 (44%)	288 (51%)	194 (33.7%)
3.51-3.75	NA	92 (16.8%)	NA	NA	NA
3.0-3.49	81 (18.6%)	150 (27.4%)	122 (21%)	154 (28%)	126 (21.9%)
2.5-2.99	15 (3.4%)	60 (10.9%)	61 (10%)	48 (9%)	103 (17.9%)
2.0-2.49	8 (1.8%)	NA	49 (7%)	13 (2 %)	68 (11.8%)
<2.5	NA	42 (7.7%)	NA	NA	NA
< 2.0	8 (1.8%)	NA	55 (9%)	5 (1%)	58 (10%)

Table 4

Post-Secondary Destinations by Campus, Class of 2020

	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C	Campus D	Campus E
Destination	Percentage (%)				
4-year college	82%	71%	64%	84%	43%
University of California	39%	NA	20%	31%	11%
California State University	12%	NA	14%	6%	17%
Out of state college	39%	NA	30%	38%	11%
Private college	10%	NA	7%	NA	NA
International	NA	NA	1%	1%	NA
2-year college	NA	21%	28%	14%	33%
Other (work, military, gap year)	NA	8%	NA	NA	24%

All data on Tables 2, 3 and 4 include statistics drawn directly from the School Profiles, published on each of the school's respective websites. It was found that data presented on School Profiles was inconsistent across all sites. For example, disaggregated data for various Asian populations was articulated at Campus A, but not at all other campuses. Therefore, if specific data points are not included in Tables 2, 3 or 4, the data points were omitted from publication.

Findings for Research Question 1

This portion of the chapter includes findings of the factors that directly contribute to the counselor capacity to implement tiered interventions. Specifically, findings to the Research Question 1: What factors in a counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions? will be discussed. Findings indicate that there are a number of factors that contribute to counselor capacity including counselor motivation, counselor education and training, counseling team dynamics, and as well obstacles that negatively impact counselors' ability to implement interventions.

Motivation

Counselors in this study are motivated to work with students and in the field of education. More than half of participants have prior experience working with students. This experience includes teaching, working as a paraeducator, and or working for a youth program as a mentor/advisor. If the participants did not have prior experience working with students, many of the participants' parent(s) or close friends worked with students as a teacher or other educator. Other counselors did not know of school counseling until a colleague or tangential opportunity arose. For example, one counselor was invited to be on a panel discussion with other recent college graduates to share perspectives on the college experience. This type of experience exposed the counselor of the positive experience working with students, which led the counselor to their training program.

For some counselors, the motivation to enter the field of school counseling stemmed from a lack of support and or lack of adequate counseling services they received from

their own high school counselors. Multiple counselors shared sentiments regarding personal experiences. For example, one participant mentions, “I had counselors that didn't really care to know who I was, or figure out what my story was.” while another responded, “I had a rough time in high school and my guidance counselor was a terrible person.” In turn, many counselors in this school district are motivated to be the effective counselors that they lacked in their own high school experience.

Lastly, counselors in this school district are motivated to work with students at the high school level. Many prefer to work with at-risk students and or students in need of additional support. Counselors feel it is their responsibility to support students, and their families, in reaching their long-term goals. These counselor motivations to address student needs are indicative of their propensity to implement interventions.

There exist various reasons for why counselors entered the education profession. Furthermore, there exist multiple reasons for why counselors have stayed in their profession. The more committed that counselors are to their profession, the more likely they are to implement tiered interventions to meet the needs of their students. (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2009)

Formal/Educational Training

Formal training enables counselors to build capacity to implement Tier Two interventions. Findings regarding the formal education of counselors in this study include the institution where counselors were trained, training program components, and training received with respect to the ASCA National Model as well as the Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Support, also known as MTMDSS.

Training Program. An astounding nine out ten counselors interviewed studied and earned their Pupil Personnel Services Credential at the same institution. Because a Pupil Personnel Services Credential is required for all public school counselors in the state of California, the 9 counselors in this study coincidentally trained at the same state university. Of the counselors who studied at the state university, each expressed feeling unprepared for the counseling profession. In chapter 5, a potential reason for this sentiment will be discussed.

Training Program Components. Most of the counselor participants found their formal counseling program to be less practical and less rigorous than they envisioned. The counselor participants expressed lack of exposure to transcript review as well as lack of training focused on college entrance requirements and admissions. Despite the fact that all counselors studied in CA, most were not trained in the requirements for studying at four-year universities in California, also known as the A-G requirements. Counselors felt unprepared to manage caseloads of students with 504 plans. Many felt that their coursework did not align with the work that is currently required of them. Overall, counselors felt they were not adequately prepared to implement the ASCA National Model nor were they prepared to fully implement an MTMDSS. It is important to note that the original publication years for the ASCA National Model and the MTMDSS framework were in 2003, and 2014, respectively. In addition, it likely took two to three years before either framework became widely known among the field of counselor education. With this information, it is not unfounded that most counselors felt they did

not understand the daily role of the school counselor until they were officially employed as a school counselor.

Praises of the counseling program included the opportunity to practice counseling with other classmates. Counselors found one of the most valuable aspects of the program was recording oneself, transcribing, and self-critiquing the recording. Counselors found that this task enabled them to practice their counseling skills and improve their practice. As a result, counselors felt prepared for the therapeutic aspect of school counseling. Counselors felt the multicultural counseling coursework was valuable in bringing awareness to issues surrounding equity and inclusivity. Lastly, multiple counselors who attended the counseling program at the state university appreciated a course focused on law and ethics, which prepared counselors to understand the expectations and boundaries of the school counselor/educator. All counselors described their practicum hours, in which they were required to train at a school site, to be the most beneficial part of their training and education.

Participants who served as teachers prior to counseling were least likely to find their counseling training useful. This is because the great deal of overlap that exists when comparing the coursework required for teachers and counselors. Counselors who obtained their teaching credential prior to their counselor training felt as though they were 'jumping through hoops' to obtain their Pupil Personnel Services credentials.

ASCA

Although most interviewees were familiar with the ASCA National Model, most did not feel confident in their counseling team's fidelity to its components. Most expressed a

lack of training with regards to finding and analyzing data. Considering that most counselors received their Pupil Personnel Services Training prior to 2003, when the ASCA National Model was first published, participant responses were not unexpected. All participants who were interviewed felt comfortable with the three counseling domains articulated in the ASCA National Model. However, many of the participants were not confident in their ability to illicit, collect, and analyze data meant to drive counseling goals.

MTMDSS

In 2014, MTMDSS was introduced in *The Use of Data in School Counseling: Hatching Results for Students, Programs, and the Profession.* Only four years later, in June of 2018, Counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District were offered training led by the Hatching Results, who specialize in professional development and training for school counseling. Counselors attribute confidence in their understanding of Tier One, Tier Two, and Tier Three support, to this training. However, there exists a lack of confidence in the implementation of Tier Two supports because counselors have been focused on Tier One curriculum/interventions.

On Job Training

Most counselors felt their educational training did not prepare them for the daily tasks required in their careers. Counselors found that most of their 'on the job' training is what prepared them for their roles. Many of the counselors felt that training on the ASCA National Model and the Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Support was received after they became counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District, not in their

counselor training program. With consideration that the ASCA National Model and Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Support were not widely implemented until recent years, and most counselor participants were trained well before 2017, counselor participant feelings regarding their training programs comes as no surprise.

Professional Relationships

Team. Counselors in Silicon Valley High School District feel confident about their counseling team. Members are accepting of differences in personality and work habits while keeping team goals and collaboration at the forefront. Although most counselors have an assigned group of students in which to support, counselors are open to working with students outside of this assignment. Counselors feel their teams are collaborative and trusting in each other's new ideas. Physical proximity to colleagues is a significant component of this collaboration. Many counselors expressed appreciation for the fact that they could call out to their colleagues from their desk to quickly ask questions and or confer with teammates. Counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District value the time allotted for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to meet. This PLC time is embedded in the weekly bell schedule at each of the five high schools. Counselors use the regular meeting times with their counseling colleagues to prepare curriculum, discuss roles and responsibilities, and ensure team members are aligned.

Longevity on counseling teams is perceived as a huge benefit among participants. Counselors who have spent multiple years working with the same team members feel they have developed a rhythm with colleagues and are very understanding of the

differences among each other. Individuals on counseling teams who have longevity are able to disagree with each other without friction.

Administrative Support. Administrators who support counseling teams and are on the pulse of the work that counselors are doing, inadvertently encourage counselors to try new ways to connect with and support students and their families. The relationship between administrators and counselors at each school site in this district vary. Some counseling teams are extremely appreciative of the support provided by administrators whereas others see the support as superficial. Participants who shared appreciation of their administrator expressed gratitude for support and encouragement, as well as support of new ideas and initiatives. Participants who expressed less enthusiasm for their administrators felt their administrator could have been more involved when counselors implemented new ideas and curriculum to students. Counselors feel supported by administrators when they are sent and granted permission to attend professional development opportunities such as conferences and or training sessions. When administrators advocate for counselors at the administrative level, this also positively impacts the relationship between administrator and counselors.

Caseload

All counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District have a caseload of 525-630 students, each. Large caseloads coupled with limited time make counselors feel they do not have the opportunity to be more intentional about Tier Two interventions. One counselor stated, “I feel so pressed for time that I don't feel like I have the intervention that I need to get to this kid”. In addition, counselors feel they have a plethora of

responsibilities which take more precedent than implementing Tier Two interventions. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, curriculum development and classroom presentations, meetings with students and families, writing letters of recommendation, supporting at-risk students, responding to emails, and responding to immediate student needs.

Time. If a Tier Two intervention is not embedded into the student schedule, such as a designated class period, it is challenging for counselors to implement consistent Tier Two interventions. Given that students have limited breaks throughout the day, it is challenging to form small groups that are able to consistently meet. Student breaks are typically for students to rest between classes, eat, socialize, and or meet for additional extracurricular activities such as club meetings.

Counselors duties and expectations vary from day to day. Counselors roles include the tasks of reviewing data, directly supporting students, managing questions and emails, planning and delivering curriculum, and regular duties as staff members. Participant responses to questions on the possibility of implementing data driven Tier Two interventions included phrases such as, as "I don't have time […] There are so many things that we have to manage". Such phrases were consistent across all participants.

Identification. Without concrete data points, it is often challenging to identify what additional supports students need. From a data retrieval standpoint, it is quite easy for counselors to pull data from their learning management system, or call upon data technicians to draw grade data on behalf of students. However, if a student is spending inordinate amounts of time to maintain their school work, or are struggling socio-

emotionally but still able to maintain their grades, it becomes extremely challenging to identify students who might need a Tier Two intervention.

Summary of Findings for Research Q1

The first research question in this study explores the factors that might contribute to a school counselor's capacity to implement interventions. Findings show that a counselor's motivation to support students, counselors' training, and counselors' responsibilities, all affect a counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions. Findings indicate that counselors have a great amount of responsibility that is prioritized over implementing Tier Two interventions. Large caseloads as well as compounding responsibilities prevent counselors from identifying and implementing specific Tier Two interventions. Counselor training received prior to the publication of both the ASCA National Model and MTMDSS frameworks did not align with the functions of the school counseling role. Instead, counselors benefited most from their in the job training. Counselors are motivated to implement Tier Two interventions that align with their roles, and do so in limited capacities that will be outlined in the remainder of this body of work.

Findings for Research Question 2

Counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District are very comfortable with implementing Tier One interventions. Most Tier One interventions at the school sites are actually counselor driven curriculum implemented in the form of classroom presentations. Often, these presentations are targeted at specific grade levels. Education regarding high school graduation requirements, college entrance requirements, four-year planning, and socio-emotional learning are all embedded in this curriculum. Beyond that,

findings show that, as a district, counselors are in the emerging stages of identifying Tier Two populations and serving Tier Two groups.

Counselors in this study seek to serve the specific needs of the populations at their respective school sites. Although each high school has varying needs, there also exists common needs among the five high schools. The following section will outline findings in this study with regards to how high schools determine Tier Two needs of their students, and what Tier Two populations are currently being served by all sites in the district. In addition, an additional section will include a more detailed description of the academic interventions offered at each site. In summary, this section will address findings that relate to Research Question 2: How do counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District determine Tier Two groups? What are the tools and instruments used to identify sub groups/subpopulations of students that need or would benefit from additional support? What are the Tier Two groups? What data drives the identification of these groups?

Tier Two Groups Served by All Sites in the Silicon Valley High School District

All five sites in the District run on a semester system and issue progress and semester grades. Each year, students are typically enrolled in four to six yearlong classes, of which each class is split into two semesters. Teachers issue two progress grades before a final semester grade is issued and each semester runs approximately 18 weeks. Progress grades are shared with students and their parents/guardians every six weeks.

D, F, or Incomplete (DFI List). If a student earns a D, F, or I grade as reported in a progress report or final semester grade report, a student is automatically eligible to be

put on a DFI list. A data query on a district information system run by a counselor or site-specific data technician creates a list of students known as the DFI list. It is a district-wide expectation that counselors confer with students on the DFI list who are on their respective caseloads. During in person learning, counselors would send individual passes to request students to the counselor office. The counselor is expected to meet or communicate with students each time the student appears on the DFI list.

Each counselor in this study discussed meetings with students on the DFI list. Counselors learn more about students during these one-to-one meetings, offer resources, and advise students on their academic progress. Through such meetings, counselors try to find supports that fit the student needs. Such supports may include accessing tutoring and or homework support, arranging a meeting with parents and or teachers, or referring students to socio-emotional or therapeutic supports.

English Learners. Findings indicate that English Learners (EL) are a common sub-population in which counselors in this study provide varying levels of support. At the time of enrollment, families in the district are required to complete information regarding the main language spoken at home. If there is an indication that the student is not fluent in English, students' English skills are assessed through a series of standardized tests. If it is determined that the student needs English support services, the student will be classified in the district as an English Learner (EL).

At each school site, there exist individuals assigned to specific roles for supporting EL students. Most schools in the study mention having an English Language Coordinator, designated to monitor the progress of English Learners. Findings indicate that in one

high school, a part time counselor is specifically assigned to supporting EL students. At other campuses, there may be a full-time counselor whose caseload includes providing support for all EL students within the high school. Lastly, at most high schools the counselor supports EL students in their respective alpha caseload assignment.

Counselor support for EL students vary from school to school (Johnson et al., 2018; Paredes, 2010). Some schools have higher EL needs than others. For example, one site had an influx of 40 students coming from Latin America in one semester. In all sites, students who are designated as EL are assigned into English Support classes, where the curriculum is comparable that of the general education curriculum, but teachers include specific English Learner strategies. Predominantly, counselor supports for EL students include the adjustment of Tier One presentations for English Support classes. At one site, a mentoring program for EL students pairs students from English Language Development 1 (ELD 1) and English Language Development 2 (ELD 2), the two of lowest levels of English, with other student mentors. Other supports for the EL subpopulation will be discussed later in this chapter.

First Generation. Counselors define a first-generation student as one who is the first in their family to attend a four-year college/university (Fallon, 1997). The district at the center of this study serves five high schools with very strong college-going cultures. As a result, there exists a sub-population of students at each site who are learning how to navigate the college application system and are the first in their families to do so. A number of counselors in the system are highly motivated to work with this population of

students. Therefore, four out of five of the sites in the district offer a program specifically for students who identify as first-generation.

AVID. Four out of five high schools in this study have a special program called Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID), that is targeted at supporting first generation students. In order for students to be admitted to this program, counselors and AVID teachers pursue different forms of recruitment with eighth grade students at feeder middle schools, and require students to apply to the program. Students are then interviewed to determine fit. Once students are admitted, they are enrolled in an AVID course with the same cohort of students each year of high school. Students in this cohort have the same AVID teacher who moves with them from year to year, in order to develop a trusting relationship in support of students' long-term goals. At each site that offers the AVID program, there is a counselor who functions as the AVID liaison. The AVID liaison is the counselor who collaborates with AVID teachers to determine counseling support that the AVID cohorts need. It is important to note that although most sites offer an AVID program, since AVID requires an application and interview process, not all students who identify as first generation are receiving explicit support

Section 504 Plans. In accordance with the U. S. Department of Education (n.d.), "The Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability." Students who are eligible for a section 504 plan in this study are provided accommodations that support their academic success. Such accommodations might include extended time on school

work and or tests, preferential seating in the classroom, copies of notes for the classes that are impacted, and annual meetings with teachers to discuss progress.

Although each site has an administrator that serves as the 504 coordinator, counselors in this study are often required to support this sub-population of students who qualify for section 504 plans. Thus, counselors are annually notified by the section 504 coordinator of students who qualify for 504 plans. Counselors typically case manage any students with 504 plans who also are assigned to their respective alpha case load. In this district, if a family is seeking a 504 plan on behalf of their student, the family will be required to first meet with a school counselor.

Student Assistance Team. Each site has a Student Assistance Team (SAT). A SAT consists of counselors, an attendance technician, a student conduct liaison, an administrator, a school-based therapist, and might include a school psychologist, special education lead, and or general education teacher(s). The SAT meets regularly to discuss students who have been referred to the team for academic, medical, socio-emotional, and other concerns. The team takes a collaborative approach to determine the best supports available for students. A student can be referred to SAT by teachers, counselors, and even a parent/guardian. Typically, before a student is assessed for a section 504 Plan or other intensive intervention, the student is referred and discussed by the SAT.

Students with Special Needs. Students in the Silicon Valley High School District who qualify for special education services are assigned a case manager. Typically, it is the case manager who oversees support services for students who qualify for special needs. Students who qualify for special needs are offered a Learning Skills class to

receive additional academic support. Often, their Learning Skills teacher is also their assigned case manager. As a result, in lieu of direct support services from a school counselor, students with special needs to receive support from a case manager.

Truancy. As referenced in Kayler and Sherman's study (2009), supporting students who do not attend school presents obvious challenges. Students who are regularly late to class, or worse, regularly absent from school without excuse are considered truant. Often, truant students are also students who academically struggle because they are not present for the content of their classroom instruction. Although this is considered a sub-population of students who need support, it is likely that a student who is considered truant in this school district also falls into any of the previous categories discussed in this chapter. Attendance technicians at each site are able to run queries for students who are considered truant. For example, a report can be run for students who have missed 10% or more of their classes, students who have been marked for 15% or more of their classes, etc.

Credit Recovery. Students who earn a D or F are identified by an intervention specialist at the district level. This list is then distributed to each counselor by their alpha assignment. Counselors in the Silicon Valley High School district reach out to students individually to offer and or enroll them into the district's summer and or evening program to make up grades. If students make up an F grade to meet graduation requirements, this is known as Credit Recovery. If students are making up a D or F grade to maintain A-G eligibility, this is known as A-G Recovery. Throughout the school year, counselors are

meeting these students, or contacting students/parents regarding recovery options and registering students for either evening or summer programs offered by the district.

As evidenced in Table 3. Grade Distribution by Campus, the volume of students in need of Credit and or A-G Recovery is very different from one site to the next. As a result, how counselors are meeting with students to offer and enroll in credit recovery looks different. One campus might summon students individually to the counselor office to discuss recovery options, whereas other sites may send an email to students/families with the recovery options. Although the format by which students and families are offered support look different, counselors at all sites are responsible for signing students up for recovery classes through the same method.

Socio-Emotional Support. Counselors at all sites offer socio-emotional support for students on an, as needed and individual basis. All sites offer Tier One socio-emotional education. However, only two of the five high schools in the district offer explicit support classes for students struggling with their emotional health.

At one high school, Terra Nova is a program where students are enrolled in English and History as a cohort and are provided additional therapeutic support services. The class sizes in the Terra Nova program are smaller, and the pace of the courses runs at a gradual pace to support student learning. Students are only admitted to this program by referral from a teacher or counselor. Although Terra Nova only exists at one school site, counselors from all high schools in the district may refer students to this program.

McKinney Vento/Foster Youth. In the entire Silicon Valley High School District, there are very few students who are considered homeless and or part of the foster

care system. Students who fall under this category are identified by the county, and information is shared with individual site administrators and counselors. There are at least 2-4 students classified under this category at each site in the Silicon Valley High School District.

Site Specific Tier Two Interventions

Each of the high schools in the study have specific programs for students in need of academic support. As mentioned earlier, Table 3. Grade Distribution by Campus, shows that the academic needs of each site vary greatly from each other. As a result, academic support looks slightly different at each high school in this study. The findings in this study show sub populations of students who are struggling academically are identified and often placed into targeted, academic support classes. The following will outline the various and explicit academic support programs offered at each individual site. It is to be noted that all four sites offer the AVID program. The following academic support programs that will be discussed are not AVID programs.

Campus A. At Campus A, there exists one explicit academic support program, Excel (a pseudonym). The Excel program targets ninth grade students and occasionally admits tenth grade students. The program adopts many components of the AVID course, without explicitly targeting first generation students. A student may be one who struggles with concepts taught in an academic class and or with completing assignments. The program includes explicit teaching of executive functioning skills, organization, goal setting, and peer tutoring. The course is taught by a credentialed teacher who closely

monitors student progress in their other courses, and includes ten 11th/12th grade students who serve as peer tutors.

Students are referred to the Excel program while in eighth grade by middle school teachers/counselors. While in eighth grade students are invited to apply to the special Excel program. If admitted, students are enrolled in the Excel course in ninth grade. If the school year has already begun, a student may be referred to the program based on DFI data compiled from the DFI list previously mentioned in this chapter. Most students stay in this program for one year. Given the option, there are one to two students each year who might elect to continue the Excel program in their tenth grade year.

Campus B. In addition to AVID, there are two explicit academic support programs in which counselors can identify and provide Tier Two interventions. The first program used the school tutorial period. Prior to school closures due to Covid-19, the tutorial time was a designated 35-minute period, set on three of the five days of school, where most students were able to access their teachers for help and support during in person learning. The second program enrolls students in a regularly scheduled class period, which meets three to four times a week, depending on the school bell schedule.

Prior to the Covid-19 school closures, tutorials were used as a way to target students who academically struggled. Although most students were able to freely go to any classroom of their choice, Campus B organized what they called an Administrative Tutorial, requiring students with D and F grades to attend. Administrative Tutorial was housed in the school library and peer tutors were available to support students. Students who are habitually on the DFI list are first enrolled in Administrative Tutorial. If students

do not show improvement with Administrative Tutorial, more intensive support is provided and students are enrolled in a Guided Studies class.

Students at Campus B who are identified as academically struggling could also be assigned a Guided Studies class. Students might be enrolled in Guided Studies automatically through the referral of middle school counselors. Guided Studies is the most intensive form of academic support offered by Campus B and is typically made up of five to eight students, a number of tutors, and a staff member to monitor student engagement. Guided Studies is offered each period of the day in order to accommodate student schedules. Students enrolled in Guided Studies do not earn high school credit toward graduation, but attendance is taken to keep students accountable.

Campus C. In addition to AVID, Campus C offers two explicit academic support programs. The following programs currently function at Campus C to best serve the academic needs of their Tier Two populations.

Like Campus A, Campus C also focuses on their ninth-grade students but instead uses Tutorial time like Campus B. '9th grade Guidance Tutorial' focuses on students who earn low marks in a ninth-grade specific level course such as Biology or English. Students are either referred by ninth grade teachers, or identified through the DFI list. When a student is summoned to ninth grade Guidance Tutorial, the student will have tutors available to support them. According to one participant, "The guidance tutorial came out of what the guidance counselors were seeing. That was a full guidance counselor created program." The counseling team at Campus B identified a need and created a Tier Two intervention to meet the needs of their students.

Beyond the ninth Grade Guidance Tutorial, Academic Foundations is a course that is offered four to five periods throughout the school day and dedicated to serving students who have been on the DFI list multiple grading periods in a row. Academic Foundations serves 10-15 students per class. The following Academic Foundations courses support student academic needs at Campus C, with a specialized focus:

Algebra Academic Foundations: One of the targeted Academic Foundations sections is dedicated to students who need support in Algebra One. Students are identified through an assessment called the Math Diagnostic Testing Project, taken in the eighth grade, or through their math course work in middle school. Students who earn a low score on the MDTP or who were enrolled in a math support course in middle school are enrolled in Academic Foundations in ninth grade.

Socio-Emotional Academic Foundations: A different Academic Foundations course provides students with socio-emotional support. This section of Academic Foundations functions similarly to other Academic Foundations courses, but the instructor chooses to include more socio-emotional teaching in the course.

Campus D. Campus D does not offer any explicit academic support programs beyond AVID. The academic needs of students at Campus D are similar to the academic needs of students at Campus A. Like Campus A, Campus D begins their search for students who might need additional academic support while students are in the 8th grade. Specifically, the guidance program at Campus D is looking for students who might be struggling with executive functioning skills, performing poorly on academic tests, or students who are struggling with work completion, yet are still motivated to attend a four-

year college. These students are invited to apply to Campus D's AVID program. As mentioned earlier, one of the qualifications for AVID is that students are first generation college students. Therefore, if an eighth grade student applies for AVID, and after an interview the counseling program finds the student to be a good fit for the program, the student will be enrolled in AVID 9 during their first year of high school. In general, most students who begin high school at Campus D with AVID 9 will continue high school in AVID 10, 11, and 12. However, each year, AVID does experience attrition with students leaving the school and or not meeting AVID requirements and thus being removed from the AVID program.

Campus E. Beyond AVID, Campus E has four explicit academic support programs for students in need of Tier Two interventions. Of all school sites in this study, Campus E historically has the largest percentage of students earning a D, F, or I grade, and the largest volume of students in their EL program. As a result, there are multiple sub-populations of students at Campus E who have access to various academic support services. Students are placed into different support courses depending on the level of support a student might need. A reading assessment called the GMRT (Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test) and an Algebra assessment called the MDTP (Math Diagnostic Test Project) are administered to students in eighth grade. Data from both of these assessments are sent to Campus E, and counselors and administrators work together to determine which support class, if any, students should be enrolled in upon entering high school. In the event that a student might have missed the GMRT assessment in eighth grade, during

the first two weeks of the school year, the GMRT is re-administered to all ninth grade students.

Students who are identified at below grade level in reading are enrolled in a class titled Goals. Most students in Goals are identified through the data received from middle schools. However, there are a small number of students who are identified after the GMRT is administered in the first two weeks of the school year. Data shows that most students who are enrolled in Goals were previously classified as English Learners, in the English Learner program for several years in a row, and then re-classified as English Proficient. Students who are enrolled in Goals receive intensive support to help improve their reading ability, fluency, and comprehension. Students in Goals are enrolled in specific ninth grade Literature and Biology sections with teachers designated to support their reading skills.

Counselors and administrators evaluate the MDTP scores received from middle schools to determine which students are most in need of mathematics support. Students who show the lowest scores or are referred by middle school counselors because of challenges found in Pre-Algebra or Algebra are enrolled in an Algebra Workshop class. This class does not issue Algebra credit to students, and is in addition to their enrollment in an Algebra class. Therefore, a student enrolled in Algebra Workshop is also enrolled in Algebra 1.

Students with the greatest need for academic support in multiple areas are enrolled in a class titled Academic Foundations. Students are selected based on both their GMRT and MDTP scores, as well as middle school counselor referrals, and Campus E's

counselor referrals. Students who need support with study skills and work completion are offered Academic Foundations as a way to obtain additional academic support. Academic Foundations is a course that is embedded into the student schedule as part of their regular class schedule. Table 5 serves as a summary of the Site-Specific Tier Two Academic Intervention programs offered by site.

Table 5

Tier Two Academic Support Programs by Campus

Program	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C	Campus D	Campus F
AVID		✓	✓	✓	✓
Excel	✓				
Academic Foundations			✓		✓
GOALS					✓
Administrative /Guided Tutorial		✓	✓		
Socio Emotional Support Class		✓			✓

Potential Subpopulations

Counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District work diligently to serve as many students as possible given their high caseloads. Evidently, the following subpopulations have been identified by many counselor participants as ones that have not explicitly been served, but would benefit from additional counselor support services.

"Middle" Students. Counselors at each of the high schools in the study express a desire to want to help and support a 'middle' group of students. This 'middle' group of students are students who are neither on the academically low-achieving end, nor on the academically high achieving end of the spectrum of all students. Due to the large counselor caseloads, counselors feel this group of students is not receiving attention and support the same way that the aforementioned groups of students are receiving support from adults on campus.

Minority Subpopulations. The Silicon Valley High School district serves a diverse group of students. However, the spread of diversity is not evenly distributed among the five high schools, and the ethnic makeup of each high school is starkly different as seen in Table 2. Campus Demographics 2019-20. Counselors at each high school in the study discussed wanting to support a minority ethnic population such as Black/African American students or LatinX students, but explicit counselor interventions for these populations do not currently exist.

Summary of Findings for Research Q2

The second research question in this study focuses on what Tier Two populations are currently being served by counselors and how such groups are determined. Findings indicate that there are specific subpopulations that are supported district wide, including students who have earned a D or F grade, English Learners, students with Section 504 Plans, and students deemed truant. In addition, there exist specific academic support programs that vary at different school sites. Lastly, there exist sub populations that

counselors would like to support, but feel they do not have the capacity to provide interventions given their responsibilities outside the scope of interventions.

Findings for Research Question 3

While the previous section discussed which Tier Two groups are targeted and how students are identified, this section will discuss how counselors implement and monitor Tier Two interventions. Some of the most common ways interventions can be implemented are through one-on-one conversations, frequent check-ins, and or regular class meetings embedded in student schedules. The following will discuss the nuances of implementing interventions for different Tier Two populations at the various school sites in the study. More specifically, this section will cover the findings that relate to Research Question 3: Beyond Identifying Tier Two groups in need, how do counselors implement and monitor a Tier Two system of support? How do counselors manage schedule conflicts and limited time constraints that are inherent in supporting large caseloads of students?

Tier Two Interventions at All Sites in the District

There exists a various Tier Two Interventions at all sites in the district. The following will discuss Tier Two interventions that are applied at all comprehensive school sites.

D, F, or Incomplete (DFI List). In the Silicon Valley High School District, progress grades are issued every 6 weeks, and semester grades are issued after the conclusion of the fall and spring semesters. As a district, all teachers are expected to issue progress and semester grades according to the same timeline. After grades are issued,

data technicians at each school site are able to compile a list of students who earned one or more D, F, or I (incomplete) grade(s). The list is then distributed to counselors. At some sites, the DFI list for the entire school site is distributed to all counselors, and counselors are expected to follow up with students who fall under their assigned alpha caseload. At other sites, the data technician might share a different DFI list specific to the assigned counselor and vice principal. Counselors who are trained in data extraction may be able to compile the DFI list on their own.

Counselors in the study are responsible for providing interventions with students who earn a D, F, or I. Prior to school closures due to Covid-19, the most common form of intervention counselors implemented was having short conversations with the student and providing resources. Typically, counselors sent 'call slips' to students while in class, and summoned students to their offices. In these short conversations, counselors were able to build connections with students, ask specific questions regarding academic progress, and provided resources and suggestions for students to improve their grades. Overall, counselors were able to provide an additional layer of support. It was during these short conversations that counselors learned other extenuating circumstances about the student that negatively impacted their academic success. For example, a counselor might have learned that a student was experiencing socio-emotional challenges or a counselor might have learned that the student's home life negatively impacted their academic progress. During these short conversations, counselors were able to set up future check-in meetings, and created written agreements with students.

While the DFI list may be manageable at one site, this list be lengthy and challenging for counselors to meet with ALL students on their respective DFI list at other sites. (This is true for both before and after Covid-19 school closures). In one grading period, it is very possible for a counselor who has a caseload of over 500 students to have over 130 students on their DFI list for one term. Many counselors expressed that as soon as they were able to intervene with all students on their DFI list, a new DFI list was distributed. This indicates that it may have taken a counselor 4-6 weeks to meet the demands of the DFI list, while attempting to meet all other demands of the counseling role.

Beyond one-on-one meetings, to strategically meet the needs of students on the DFI list, counselors create ways to prioritize interventions to students. At some sites where DFI lists are considered long, sub populations of students on the DFI list have been targeted. For example, seniors might be prioritized because their graduation status is most imminent or ninth grade students might be prioritized to intervene early in their high school career.

English Learners. At all high schools in the study, students who are identified as English Learners are entitled to additional support in hopes of creating more equity among students. Upon assessment, if it is determined that a student's English comprehension, fluency, and speaking skills are not comparable to students at the high school level, students may be enrolled in an English Language Development class (ELD). The district offers ELD at three different levels, ELD 1, ELD 2, and ELD 3, where ELD 1 provides the most intensive English support. Initially, student ELD levels are determined at the district level and are annually assessed by ELD site coordinators.

Students who are enrolled in an ELD course are also concurrently enrolled in a dedicated grade level English course where teachers are prepared to provide EL support along with grade level curriculum. Depending on the site and student academic history, a student in the EL program may also be enrolled in specific Biology, Chemistry, US History, and or World History courses with specific EL supports. Counselors work directly with ELD coordinators to ensure students are enrolled in appropriate EL courses.

Often, counselors adjust the counseling curriculum to meet the needs of EL students. Most often, lessons are targeted at specific grade levels or subject areas, and may include more images and less verbosity in order to convey the information in the most efficient way possible. In addition, because the sequence of courses may be different for EL students than the general education populations, information is adjusted to align with the course sequences for EL students. Counselors might have more frequent check-ins with EL students on their alpha caseload to ensure students on track for graduation and understand their academic requirements.

First Generation/AVID. The AVID program is dedicated to first generation students seeking to be eligible to apply and gain admission to four-year universities. Students who are selected into the program upon entry into high school are enrolled in AVID 9. Each year of high school students are enrolled in an AVID course with the same cohort of students, and matriculate through AVID 9, AVID 10, AVID 11, and AVID 12, with the same AVID teacher. Thus, AVID is an additional course that AVID students are enrolled in each year. Campus B, Campus C, and Campus D, each serve one cohort of

AVID students per grade level. However, at Campus E, there are enough first-generation students to serve two cohorts of AVID per grade level.

Students who are chosen for AVID receive additional instruction in organization, executive functioning, and study skills. Part of the AVID curriculum includes a tutorial session once or twice a week, assisted by AVID tutors, where students can work on homework and receive academic support. During these tutoring sessions, students can work in groups by subject area, such as math, English, history, and science. AVID teachers complete regular check-ins with AVID tutors to get a pulse of how AVID students are performing and progressing in school. In addition, the counselor who serves as the AVID liaison will visit the AVID classrooms every 6 weeks, if not more often, to do individual check-ins with students. The counselor who serves as the AVID liaison also closely collaborates with the AVID teachers to provide the most relevant support.

Although the AVID is a national program that has compulsory components, the AVID coordinator (a counselor at 2 sites in this study) works with AVID teachers and administrators to plan college field trips, college research curriculum, parent education, and various other learning opportunities for AVID students. The AVID curriculum includes intensive college planning and application support, as well as the previously mentioned study and organizational skills.

Students are expected to meet the agreements outlined by the AVID program. Counselors and AVID teachers monitor student progress regularly. If students are not meeting the requirements to be in the AVID program, such as a drop-in college eligible

grades and or attendance, students may be exited from the AVID program and referred to alternative programs to better meet their academic needs.

Section 504 Plans. Counselors in this study case manage any students with 504 plans who also are assigned to their respective alpha case load. Case management may include, but is not limited to, frequent check-ins with the student, grade monitoring, advice on how to exercise accommodations, organizing and or proctoring when students choose to use extended time on tests/exams, and participation in 504 meetings with teachers. Counselors work with students who have 504 plans to ensure they are receiving the support and accommodations as outlined in their formal section 504 plan agreements.

Students with Special Needs. Students in the Silicon Valley High School District who qualify for special education services are offered a Learning Skills class to receive additional academic support. Often, their Learning Skills teacher is also their assigned case manager. In Learning Skills, the teacher monitors student progress in each of the student's courses, and works closely with general education teachers to provide academic accommodations to students. Students in the Learning Skills class are likely to receive support on pending projects, upcoming essays, exam preparation, and executive functioning.

Truancy. The volume of students deemed truant varies from site to site. Administrative Deans exist at two of the high schools in the study to help support the higher volume of truancy. Counselors at all sites work in tandem with attendance clerks and administrators to address individual students who have trouble with attendance. Such

interventions include meetings with family to determine how best to support students while bringing awareness to the problems that exist with lack of attendance.

At one high school, GASS (Guidance, Administration, Student Support) meetings are held once a week to discuss and implement interventions for students not attending school. Often, school-based therapists are a part of GASS meetings and help students who might be missing school due to mental health concerns. GASS members share a spreadsheet to document interventions such as calls home, meetings with parents, home visits, etc.

Credit Recovery. All counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District are responsible for reviewing transcripts and ensuring that students have opportunities to make up D and F grades required for high school graduation and or college eligibility. As a result, for any student who earned a D or F grade in English, history, mathematics, science, or a physical education course, counselors are responsible for meeting with the student and offering evening or summer course options. Counselors are expected to sign students up for either the evening or summer program, and follow up with students who miss two or more classes during either program's duration.

Socio-Emotional Support. Counselors at each site in the study meet with students individually. From these meetings, counselors are able to provide socio-emotional support on an as-need basis. Students who need more intensive therapeutic support are referred to school-based therapists or a more intensive support program. Campus B and Campus D offer explicit courses that provide both academic and socio-emotional support to students.

At Campus B, Trust (a pseudonym), is a dedicated program for students in 10th and 11th grade who struggle academically and benefit from socio-emotional support. Students who are enrolled in Trust are enrolled in English and History with the same group of students and teachers. In these courses, instructors explicitly teach study skills and provide learning scaffolds for students. In addition, students are pulled from class once a month to meet with the school-based-therapist.

At Campus D, there are multiple Academic Foundations classes offered throughout the school day. One of these Academic Foundations classes focuses on students in need of both academic and socio-emotional support. Students receive both academic support and socio-emotional curriculum in this course.

McKinney Vento/Foster Youth. In the entire Silicon Valley High School District, there are very few students who are considered homeless and or part of the foster care system. Students who fall under this category are closely monitored by their school counselors. Students who are classified as such, receive regular check-in meetings. Counselors make themselves more readily available than they traditionally would for general education students.

"Middle" Students. Counselors in the study expressed wanting to support students who are neither struggling academically or academically excelling, but rather fall in the middle of this academic achievement spectrum. Counselors are in the emerging phases implementing interventions for this Tier Two. At Campus E, counselors spent two weeks summoning students in this group, to meet with students one-by-one, and provide more intensive training regarding the college application process. Counselors used

student GPAs to determine which students to target. Prior to Covid-19, students in this targeted group were provided instruction about college eligibility and how to register for college entrance exams, (SAT and or ACT). Counselors learned from these meetings that targeted students in this group did not realize their eligibility for college admissions until the meetings with their counselor took place.

Site Specific Academic Support

As each site in the Silicon Valley High School District serves a different population of students, not all sites have the same approaches to support. Table 3 and Table 4 show the stark differences in grade point averages and post-high school destinations among all five high schools. The following will discuss how academic interventions are implemented and monitored at each of the five sites in this study.

Campus A. Campus A has a large populations of students that are meeting and or exceeding the academic requirements for both California High School diplomas as well as California University admissions. The one academic support program is called **.**

Excel (a pseudonym). At Campus A, the Excel class is the main academic support program for students in the general education population. The program is predominately for ninth grade students but on rare occasions, students may elect to enroll/repeat the course in 10th grade. The Excel course consists of approximately 20 Excel students, and 10 Excel tutors, all enrolled in that same course and part of the students' normal class schedule.

In the Excel class, the teacher focuses on goal setting, organization, study skills, and student-teacher communication. Once or twice a week, Excel students are provided study

times where they can work with tutors and obtain the academic support for whatever subject area they choose. Typically, the Excel teacher serves as a case manager who reviews the academic progress of each student and makes suggestions for which areas/assignments students can target.

Campus B. Campus B offers a number of Tier Two academic interventions for their student body. Campus B counselors use both tutorial and class meetings to provide support services.

Administrative Tutorial. When students at Campus B are academically struggling, have high volume of missing assignments, or have multiple low progress grades, counselors assign them to Administrative Tutorial. Typically, tutorial is a period where students have the freedom to see whatever teacher they choose and can work independently on class assignments/homework. However, Administrative Tutorial requires students to check-in to a specific classroom or location, such as the school library, and their attendance is recorded. If a teacher needs to see a student in their classroom during a tutorial, the teacher can provide the student with a pass. The student is then expected to check into the Administrative Tutorial for attendance, and then proceed to their teacher's classroom.

The Administrative Tutorial program functions by way of parent volunteers who prepare folders of missing work for students who are assigned to the compulsory session. During the tutorial session, students are monitored by parents and expected to complete missing work. When students have raised their grade to at least a C, they are no longer required to attend Administrative Tutorial. The population of students in Administrative

Tutorial fluctuates throughout the year, as students ebb and flow through various grades in multiple classes.

Guided Studies. Guided Studies is a class that provides the time and space for students to work on assignments and study for their academic load. Guided Studies is offered every period of the day to accommodate any student's schedule. When students in the Guided Studies course show improvement, they can be exited from the class at any time during the school year.

Campus C. Campus C provides Tier 2 academic intervention programs, depending on student need, are implemented through a tutorial period or scheduled course. The following with discuss Campus C's main academic interventions.

Guided Tutorial. At Campus C, the Guided Tutorial program focuses on ninth grade students who are not achieving in mathematics, biology, or English. Like Campus B, tutorial is a time used to support the sub-population of students who are academically struggling. At Campus C, one tutorial is dedicated to students having difficulty with math and or biology, and a second tutorial is used to support students who struggle with English. Guided tutorial is staffed with student peer tutors who can review materials with ninth grade students to help them complete assignments or retake quizzes for grade improvements.

Counselors work with teachers in an effort to make Guided Tutorial as efficient as possible. They communicate with teachers to compile the list of students who would benefit from Guided Tutorial and get input on the assignments that students can be working on and or prepare for. Counselors send passes to classrooms to summon

students to subject specific tutorials. During each Guided Tutorial session, two counselors serve as monitors and check in with students from time to time, creating a supporting, positive, environment. Unlike Campus B's Administrative Tutorial, Campus C's Guided Tutorial does not record attendance. Guided Tutorial is an imperfect system and not 100% of students are attending. However, the system has worked for the 40-60% of students who are summoned and attend.

Academic Foundations. Academic Foundations is a support class, limited to approximately 15 students per section at Campus C. The various sections of Academic Foundations have different foci. For example, one Academic Foundations class might focus on students benefiting from additional socio-emotional support, whereas another Academic Foundations section might focus on students in need of more intense pre-Algebra support. Other sections of Academic Foundations may be for students who struggle in multiple academic areas.

Counselors work with administrators to determine which section of Academic Foundations might best fit the students' needs. In addition, counselors monitor student progress and communicate with administrators on whether or not students are prepared to "graduate" from the Academic Foundations program. Students can graduate at any time during the semester, or stay in Academic Foundations the entire school year.

Campus D. Campus D does not have any explicit programs for students who struggle in academics. Campus D's AVID program, previously discussed, supports first generation students, and by default may also support students who are first generation

AND find academic challenges. In addition, Campus D's school counselors meet with all students who are populated on the DFI list each grading period.

Campus E. Campus E offers the most academic support services of all campuses in the Silicon Valley High School District. Campus E's main support service programs are discussed below.

Goals. Students who are enrolled in the ninth grade Goals program at Campus E have been identified as performing below grade level in reading and comprehension. These students receive additional support in English and Biology in comparison to their peers. Instead of being in any general education English and Biology course, students are enrolled in sections of English and Biology with specific instructors to support their reading comprehension needs. Students who show strong progress can be exited from Goals and moved into mainstream English and or Biology courses upon teacher recommendation. If students do not show progress in ninth grade, they are able to continue Goals in 10th grade with specific sections commensurable to the district's 10th grade English and history classes. Because the true intention is for a student to graduate and exit the Goals program, a Goals program for 11th and 12th grade students does not exist.

Academic Foundations. Academic Foundations is a class designated for students to gain access to additional academic support and instruction to develop study skills and habits. For ninth grade students, there is a much more formal process for enrollment into Academic Foundations. Whereas for 10th grade students, enrollment might be based on counselor and teacher recommendations. Counselors visit the Academic Foundations

classes regularly to check in with students, review grades, and provide additional academic planning support. In comparison to students in the general education pool who are not enrolled in Academic Foundations, students enrolled in the program are seeing counselors more frequently.

Summary of Findings for Research Q3

The third research question focuses on how counselors implement and monitor Tier Two interventions. In summary, counselors in this study use an array of interventions that include one-on-one conversations, summoning students to a tutorial period, and enrolling students in academic support classes to provide Tier Two interventions. Students in most need of academic support are enrolled in classes that have additional support beyond what the counselor provides, through an instructor, teachers, or other educator.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Reflections

The purpose of this case study was to examine how counselors in the Silicon Valley High School district determine, implement, and monitor Tier Two interventions. Subpopulations, otherwise known as students who fall under Tier Two category, need slightly more intensive intervention that can be delivered both individually or in a small group setting (Ockerman et al., 2012). Tier Two services are responsive and are provided to students whose needs are not met with Tier One services. In-depth interviews with 10 participants through 15 semi structured questions were guided by the following research questions:

1. What factors in a counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions?
2. How do counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District determine Tier Two groups? (What are the tools and instruments used to identify sub groups/subpopulations of students that need or would benefit from additional support? What are the Tier Two groups? What data drives the identification of these groups?)
3. Beyond Identifying Tier Two groups in need, how do counselors implement and monitor a Tier Two system of support? How do counselors manage schedule conflicts and limited time constraints that are inherent in supporting large caseloads of students?

Counselor responses provide information and insights into how Tier Two interventions, as defined by Hatch's (2017) MTMDSS model, are identified and implemented at the

Silicon Valley High School District. Participants shared opinions about their formal training prior to entering their roles as professional school counselors, as well as how Tier Two interventions are implemented at each of their respective school sites. Findings from this study can benefit the development and improvement of comprehensive high school counseling programs, as well as counselor training programs at the university level, that prepare their counselors in training for the profession.

Chapter 4 summarized the analysis of the data collected. The themes that emerged from this data include: 1) Counselors are motivated to create connections and help students 2) Data and district expectations drive the Tier Two interventions implemented by counselors 3) Enrolling students in a course and or using tutorial periods are the most common methods to implement academic Tier Two interventions 4) Counselor interventions to support students in other capacities are in the emergent phase.

Conclusions

Data from questionnaires, interviews, and field notes were triangulated to produce the findings of this study. This section will outline conclusions to the three main research questions outlined in this body of work.

Conclusions for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asks what factors in a counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions. Findings show that there are four main factors that contribute to the counselor participants' abilities to implement Tier Two interventions. First, like counselors in other studies, counselors in this study are highly motivated by the connections they make with

students and their ability to help others (DeMato & Curcio, 2006). Second, participants identify implementing a number of academic Tier Two interventions as part of their role as counselors in Silicon Valley High School District. Third, counselors' large caseloads negatively impact their capacity to implement Tier Two interventions (Lapan et al., 2012). Lastly, the training that counselors receive directly affects counselor's confidence and ability to implement interventions (Carey, 2005; Goodman-Scott et al., 2016; Holcomb-McCoy, 2009).

Counselor Motivation. According to Privet's (2018) study on counselor motivation, counseling research has not explored the relationship of school counselor motivation with the implementation of ASCA standards. As evidenced by the interview responses from all participants in the study, counselors are motivated to work with sub-populations. Counselors see their careers as suitable to their personalities. Words such as 'nurturing", 'giving advice', 'building relationships', 'connecting', and 'helping people' were a common thread among interview responses. Similar to Goodrich's (2018) study on counselor motivation to work with LGBTQQI students, counselors in this study are motivated to help subpopulations such as at-risk students, English Learners, and students who are not given as much attention as other sub-populations.

Counselor Role and Responsibility. Counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District express serving specific subpopulations as part of their role as employees in the district. Counselors see that one of the many components of their role includes serving students on an individual or small group basis (Adkins, 2019; Ballard & Murgatroyd, 1999; Burton, 2007). Supporting the Tier Two groups of students who have

earned a D, F, or I grade, as well as supporting the Tier Two group of English Learners is consistent across all counselors at all sites. As evidenced in the interview responses, counselor participants describe supporting these aforementioned subpopulations as part of their role and fulfillment of job duties.

Counselor Caseload. As evidenced by responses to the pre-interview questionnaire, the average number of students on each of the participants' caseloads is 567. This high volume of students, coupled with the amount of duties that counselors report, prevent counselors from implementing additional interventions for Tier Two groups. Having more school counselors available to support students is directly related to positive student attendance and behavior (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Carrell, S. E., & Carrell, S. A., 2006). This average caseload is more than twice the recommended caseload of 250 students that the ASCA National Model recommends (2017). Although counselors express wanting to incorporate additional Tier Two interventions, counselor participants feel they do not have the bandwidth and or capacity to do so.

Counselor Training. The ASCA National Model in addition to the Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Supports are complex frameworks that take time and training to learn and implement (Fye et al., 2018, 2020; Hatch et al., 2015). The ASCA National Model was originally published in 2003, and the MTMDSS was introduced to counselor education in 2014. Counselor participants express familiarity with both models, however, do not express sentiments of expertise or confidence as an expert in both frameworks. Nine out of ten counselor participants expressed that their formal training to become counselors did not fully prepare them for their roles as school counselors. Since many of

the counselors earned their certification to become school counselors prior to the publication of the MTMDSS framework (2014), counselors expressed their emerging practice in implementing a three-tiered model.

Counselors shared appreciation for the training that the Silicon Valley High School District provided with the Hatchings Institute in the summer of 2018. Counselors' ability to implement both frameworks with fidelity are in the developing stage. This finding is consistent with Lapan's study (2012), which indicates inconsistent implementation of the ASCA National model and points to the importance of counseling training and continual professional development.

Conclusions for Research Question 2

The second research question asks how and what Tier Two groups are supported by counselors in this study. Based on interview responses, findings indicate that counselors have a multitude of ways to identify subpopulations including data queries, referrals, and collaboration with other staff members. This section will articulate both the ways in which subpopulations are identified as well as the explicit subpopulations that are being served by counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District.

Data Queries. One of the first ways in which students are identified is through database queries on the district learning management system. Such data queries are the most effective approach to helping counselors develop a differentiated delivery system (Carey & Dommitt, 2012). Each school has a data technician who can run queries based on student grades, English Learner status, gender, ethnicity, or enrollment in specific courses. In this particular study, explicit groups that are supported through this

identification method include students who are on the DFI list, English Learners, students who have been deemed truant, and students who have earned a D or F semester grade in courses required for graduation, such as English or History. There is a significant relationship between professional development and the use of data (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016; Young & Kaffenberger, 2015). Counselors in this study provide the aforementioned Tier Two groups as strong models for how the data are used to target specific populations.

Referral & Conferencing. A second way that counselors determine students in a specific subpopulation are by conferral with middle and high school teachers (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016). Annually, counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District communicate with teachers to obtain referrals for students who are most likely to benefit from additional academic support. Schools should use data and teacher inputs to place students in readily available, research based, Tier Two interventions (McDaniel et al., 2015). Groups that are explicitly supported through this method of referral include students who are invited to apply to AVID, students who could be enrolled in additional academic support classes such as GOALS and Academic Foundations, students who could benefit from additional academic support through Administrative/Guided Tutorial, and students who need additional socio-emotional support.

Collaboration. The counselor role includes consulting with other staff members such as teachers, administrators, school-based therapists, attendance clerks, and parents/guardians (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016; Johnson, 2010). It is through such conferences that students might also be identified and offered support in terms of Tier

Two services. Each school site includes a Student Assistance Team who is composed of various members of staff that may include a school administrator, counselors, a school-based therapist, an attendance clerk, and others who meet regularly to discuss how to better support students in need. Tier Two groups who are identified through such conferencing include students who are truant, students who are academically struggling, students with multiple concerns or extenuating circumstances, and students who are eventually assessed for either Section 504 or Individualized Education (Special Education) Plans. Lastly, a number of sites in the study host weekly GASS (Guidance Administrative Student Support) meetings to further document the support provided to specific students in need.

Conclusions for Research Question 3

As the Tier Two subpopulations vary in need, so do their respective interventions (Milburn, 2017). The last question of the study explores how counselors implement and monitor interventions for the Tier Two groups identified in Research Question 2. The types of interventions that will be discussed in this section are: one-on-one meetings, meetings with teachers/family, mandated tutorial meetings, a class embedded in the student schedule, and referral to more intensive supports.

One-on-One Meetings. One of the most common interventions that counselors exercise are one-on-one meetings with students. Prior to Covid-19 and remote learning, counselors would summon students to their respective offices to address academic concerns. Since emergency remote learning was put into place in March of 2020, during remote learning counselors conduct meetings via video conferencing. During these

individual meetings, counselors ask questions that provide information on what might be preventing the student from academic success. Counselors offer academic resources such as access to tutoring, communication with teachers, and advise on organizational strategies. Often, counselors learn important details in the students' lives that provide a greater context into the students' situation. On occasion, these meetings result in a referral to a school based-therapist or resources that support student life circumstances.

Meetings with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Teacher(s). Beyond one-on-one meetings, counselors can schedule meetings with a student and parent(s)/guardian(s). Such meetings are scheduled to further explore insights shared in previous one-on-one meetings with students, or if one-on-one meetings with students prove ineffective. In addition, meetings with a student and their family may be initiated by a teacher or staff member who expressed concerns about the student's well-being, behavior, or academic performance. During such meetings, insights are shared and all parties involved have the opportunity to ask questions and obtain answers in support of the student. This intervention is implemented on a case by case basis, for any student who falls under the Tier Two category. This meeting with family members can address both academic and or socio-emotional concerns.

Mandated Tutorial. When students' grades decline, Tier Two academic support is responsive and can be implemented through a tutorial period. Prior to Covid-19 school closures, all high schools in the study offered multiple tutorial periods each week, where students had the autonomy to see teachers of their choice, or prepare for their upcoming class. In general, tutorial was meant to be a time where students can do work, make up

assignments after an absence, or have a break between classes. During tutorial, students are not assigned a specific class nor is attendance recorded. However, a Tier Two intervention exercised by counselors in this study is known as a "Guidance" or "Administrative" tutorial. Depending on either student progress grades and or teacher referral, students are issued a slip to inform them of their assignment to Guidance/Administrative Tutorial. Students are expected to report to a specific location on campus and their autonomy to go to a classroom of their choice is revoked. During the Guidance/Administrative tutorial, students are provided tasks specific to the class in which they are underperforming. In some Tutorials, students' make-up quizzes are proctored and or students have access to subject specific tutors. At most high schools in the study that offer the Guidance/Administrative Tutorial, students are assigned to the tutorial period once a week until their grades improve.

Special Course Enrollment. Counselors in this study exercise preventative Tier Two strategies based on data through course scheduling. Prior to their entry into high school, a great amount of data is collected about each student in regards to their home language, as well as their English and math proficiency levels. If their home language is not English, students are assessed and are offered enrollment into English Language Development courses depending on their reading and comprehension abilities. In addition, middle school counselors and administrators refer students who might benefit from additional support with academic habits/organization, mathematics, and or behavioral support. As a result of this collected data, students are offered enrollment into 1-2 courses beyond their normally scheduled classes to receive support. Districtwide,

courses offered to students include three different levels of English Language Development, Academic Foundations, GOALS, Excel, and AVID. When families are amenable, students are enrolled in one of these courses as a regularly scheduled class period that meets three times per week. During class meetings, the teacher provides appropriate support to the students' needs. For example, the Excel teacher at Campus A instructs students on goal setting, organization, and communication with teachers (Kayler, 2009). In all academic based support classes, students have access to additional tutoring in their class. School based therapists use the time that students are scheduled in such intervention courses to meet with students in need of socio-emotional support through therapeutic services.

Outside Referral. When Tier Two interventions that are implemented and monitored do not prove to be effective, students are organically escalated into Tier Three services. Such interventions include referral to outside specialists, evaluation and or assessment for more intensive services, and or additional meetings with parents and administrators.

Recommendations for Future Practice

This case study focuses on the ways in which counselors in one high school district determine, implement, and monitor Tier Two interventions. The knowledge, opinions, and insights of the 10 counselor participants in the study contribute to the following recommendations for practice. The following recommendations are for educators in the Silicon Valley High School District and can provide introspection for all public high school counselors and counselor educators.

Underrepresented Populations

Currently, findings indicate that counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District do not explicitly support students from underrepresented populations. According to the Hatching's Results (2017), data driven, Tier Two, targeted interventions are for some students and include screenings for equity and access issues. It is recommended that counselors create ways to identify small, underserved groups such as students of color, students choosing community college or trade programs, and or students who are on the cusp of being A-G college eligible. More explicitly, counselors do not directly target students who belong to underrepresented groups. It is crucial that counselors take this data driven approach to bring equitable practices into the school system (ASCA, 2012). When such subpopulations of students are explicitly identified, counselors can provide resources to such groups to decrease gaps in equity. For example, counselors can provide small group counseling sessions for the following underrepresented groups: African-American, Hispanic/LatinX (Havlik et al., 2020; Rodriguez et al. 2015). In addition, it is recommended that Asian students be disaggregated (Dixon, 2011; Goyal, 2016; Olive, 2008). Underrepresented Asian students might include, but are not limited to the following ethnicities: FilipinX, Cambodian, Hmong, Vietnamese, and Laotian. It is recommended that these student groups are explicitly identified and targeted, and a needs assessment be conducted to provide appropriate support services.

First-Generation Students. Findings indicate that four out of the five high schools in the Silicon Valley High School District have an AVID program that is dedicated to support first generation students. However, not all first-generation students at each school site are

enrolled in this program. It is recommended that counselors determine ways to collect and screen data to support first generation students (Atanasov, 2013; Havlik et al., 2020). Although the AVID program in the district is meant to serve first generation students, the program is limited to only serving students who apply and are accepted into the program. Identifying ways to screen data and explicitly identify such groups will enable all counselors to offer support to all first-generation students, especially those of whom may not be aware of the inequities that exist in the first place (Olive, 2008).

College and Career Interventions

Findings demonstrate that high school counselors have exemplary models for academic interventions as evidenced in Table 5. In addition, counselors in this study provide socio-emotional Tier Two interventions on a case by case basis. However, little to no mention of career interventions were found in this study. According to ASCA (2005), counselors have the monumental task of being responsible for students' academic, career, and personal/social development (Moyer, 2011). It is recommended that counselors and educational leaders research data-driven methods of identifying and implementing Tier Two interventions for students in need of career counseling support.

Small Groups

Counselors in the study expressed supporting students individually, enrolling students in a class, and summoning students to tutorial for academic support. Findings did not indicate that counselors support students in the small group counseling setting. According to Belser, Shillingford, and Joe (2016), counselor Tier Two interventions include direct small group services for minor problem behaviors such as anger management, social

skills development, and or problem solving. It is recommended that counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District exercise this method of intervention with small groups previously mentioned in this section, or any other identified groups in need. Depending on the students, the small group-based approach for implementing interventions can be a way for students to experience peer modeling, social reinforcement, immediate feedback, and practice of new skills (Merrell, 2003). Such groups can be formed without explicit enrollment in a course. Through small group counseling, students can find peer support, while feeling encouraged and less isolated or targeted.

High School Integration

It is evident that the implemented academic interventions, demographic make-up, and grade distributions at each site (see Table 2, 3 and 4) are vastly different. Although each site serves a different population of students, it is recommended that families and the district work together to integrate the schools. Economic integration at schools can increase the academic performance of socioeconomically disadvantaged students without negatively impacting the performance of students who are not socioeconomically disadvantaged (Stuart, 2011). Also, Tefera et al. (2011) indicate that in addition to the academic benefits of school integration, students experience long term social benefits as a reduction in racial stereotypes are associated with integrated schools. School integration will likely decrease the stark differences observed in grade distribution and academic interventions observed in this study. Such an integration might allow counselors of the district collaborate and implement comparable Tier Two interventions.

Recommendations for Future Research

To further understand Tier Two interventions, two potential foci for future studies include 1) examining the effectiveness of Tier Two interventions on student outcomes and 2) studying the attitudes and behaviors of students who have been identified as part of the Tier Two population. Although this study focuses on how counselors identify and implement Tier Two interventions, potential for future research related to this study will be discussed below.

Studying the Outcomes of Tier Two Interventions

Studying the outcome of Tier Two interventions can be beneficial for counselors and administrators to determine if a Tier Two intervention is effective. For example, counselors can determine if mandated tutorials are effective at improving student grades and or attitudes toward academic learning. Alternatively, counselors may be able to study the effectiveness of one-on-one meetings and attendance outcomes for students. After a singular intervention is determined, it is recommended that the study be deliberately focused and specific, to avoid including other factors that might contribute to the outcome.

Studying Attitudes and Behaviors of Tier Two Students

Studying the attitudes and behaviors of students in a Tier Two group will greatly benefit the counselors who implement the intervention. When students' attitudes and behaviors are closely examined, counselors can build on this study to improve their practice and help influence other counselors intending to implement similar strategies and interventions. In addition, garnering student feedback can be an iterative process that

helps any comprehensive counseling program continually move through the fluidity of student needs.

Implications for Educational Leadership and Policy

Of the literature reviewed, there are a number of studies on the implementation of the ASCA National Model but very few on the implementation of the MTMDSS models (Carey et al., 2012; Fye, 2020; Sink, 2016). Although these frameworks are highly recommended for the counseling profession, further examining practical applications is important for any high school counselor. Moreover, findings from this study may be beneficial to improve how programs educate and train their students on the ASCA National Model and the MTMDSS framework, improve the training that counselors receive to implement Tier Two interventions, and support administrators in making informed decisions that directly affect the work of their school counselors. Lastly, unknowingly and surprisingly, findings from this study may provide a feedback loop for counseling training programs at the (state) university level, where the participants receive their formal training and certification to become school counselors.

Training Improvements

Educational leaders who determine the curriculum for counselor training programs and certification are encouraged to review the counseling curriculum with a focus on ASCA and MTMDSS training. Nine out of ten of the participants in this study indicated that their training program did not adequately prepare them for their daily duties as school counselors. It is recommended that educational leaders ensure their curriculum includes training on the ASCA National Model and MTMDSS framework. Most

importantly, the training curriculum should allow counselors in training to practice applications of the framework through mock simulations.

It is encouraged that counselor training programs include practical based applications of the ASCA and MTMDSS models. It is recommended that counselors have opportunities to practice the skills of identifying and filtering data, as well as opportunities to determine and implement interventions. These skills are essential to both the ASCA and MTMDSS models, as well as crucial to the effectiveness of implementing Tier Two interventions that support subpopulations of students in need.

Administrative Decision Making

School and District administrators make important decisions that directly affect the role of the school counselor. Findings from this study provide strong implications for educational leaders to be mindful and thoughtful about the populations that are targeted by the school counselor. This study demonstrates that counselors in the Silicon Valley School District focus on specific student populations with the understanding that serving such populations is part of their role as a Silicon Valley High School District counselor. Thus, if counselors feel other components of their role as professionals include serving subpopulations, they are more likely to explicitly target such subpopulations.

Findings from this study provide insight for educational leaders to see the breadth and depth of the work of the school counselor. Often, school administrators are not aware of the nuances and responsibilities that counselors hold (Adkins, 2019; Burton, 2007). As a result, findings from this study provide implications for the decision makers who

determine and directly affect the caseload of each counselor (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Gagnon & Mattingly, 2016; Lieberman, 2004).

Counselor Caseload

As stated in various sections of this dissertation, the ASCA National Model recommended ratio for school counselors is 250 students to one school counselor. In this study, the average student to counselor ratio is 567 to one school counselor, more than double the recommendation. To address this large caseload, it is crucial for educational leaders to address the expectations, as well as roles and responsibilities of the school counselor with respect to both the ASCA National Model and the heavy student to counselor ratios that exist. If possible, it is recommended that school and district administrators address this issue of high student to counselor ratios by either redefining the roles and responsibilities of the counselor or employ additional counselors to reduce ratios to closer meet the ASCA recommended ratio.

Counselor Training Programs

Without background knowledge of counselor training, this study was initiated to examine how Tier Two interventions are implemented in the Silicon Valley High School District. Unbeknownst to the primary researcher, findings revealed that nine out of ten participants in this study obtained their school counseling credential from the same university. Information from the post interview questionnaire (see Appendix 6) indicates that most of these professionals received their PPS credentials prior to the year 2003, when the ASCA National Model was released (ASCA, 2004). Since the same counselor participants also indicated that they did not feel their formal training prepared them for

their professional roles as school counselors, it is recommended that the educational leaders at universities that issue PPS credentials create a feedback loop for students who have completed their counselor credential program and are employed as school counselors. This feedback loop may provide feedback to the program leaders that can lead to positive adjustments in counseling programs. Iterative adjustments to their program may lead to stronger training in the ASCA National Model, the MTMDSS framework, and to better prepared counselors-in-training.

Reflections

I originally chose to focus on school counseling Tier Two interventions based on an organic interest to improve my own practice as a school counselor, coupled with a pure curiosity about how other counseling programs operate. While reflecting on the past two years of study, my reflections diverge into two of the following areas:

Dissertation Process

The process by which this study was developed, conducted, and analyzed has been a journey that my cohort and I have learned from, tremendously. As this process is ending, the following are ways the study could have been improved:

1. Participants in this study were limited to high school counselors. However, it is evident that school district administrators are also influential in determining subpopulations of students who are targeted for support. Rather than exclusively including high school counselors, I would expand my participants to include district office personnel who work directly with school counselors, as well as administrators who make decisions that directly affect the work of the school counselors.

2. A pre-interview intake questionnaire and predetermined interviewed questions were generated prior to the administration of all interviews. While analyzing the findings of this study, it was evident that there were minor pieces of information that revealed gaps in my findings. In hindsight, the pre-interview questionnaire could be modified to elicit the data that was obtained in the post-interview questionnaire (see Appendix 6).

Informed Counselor Role

This study on how counselors identify and implement Tier Two interventions has been extremely informative to my practice as a high school counselor. First and foremost, the opportunity to learn from colleagues in the Silicon Valley High School District regarding their comprehensive counseling programs has been both fascinating and informative. As a colleague and member of the Guidance Study Group, improving the professional development for counselors in our district is a goal that can be tackled through further examination of the MTMDSS model, coupled with an analysis of data to identify Tier Two populations that are not being served. Being intentional with the practice of Tier Two interventions will better serve our students who do not self-identify as needing support.

It is evident that the demands of the school counselor in the Silicon Valley High School District are ever increasing. However, there are definite sub populations that are not explicitly served the same way students in need of academic support are served. It will be important and imperative for counselors to confer with site administrators, with

the use of data, to ensure such subpopulations are supported to the best of the district's ability.

Summary

This descriptive case study dives into the Silicon Valley High School District to explore the factors in the counselors' role that contribute to their capacity to implement Tier Two interventions, how they determine Tier Two groups, and how their counseling programs implement and monitor Tier Two interventions.

The counselors in this study bear the weight of high student to counselor ratios. To address these high ratios, counselors are encouraged to implement both the ASCA National Model and a Multi-Tiered Multi Domain System of Support (MTMDSS). A Tier One curriculum provides services to all students, Tier Two intervention provides services to some students, and Tier Three interventions support students with higher, more specific needs.

Findings from questionnaires and interviews indicate that counselors in the Silicon Valley High School District are motivated to build connections with students and benefit from more formalized training in the MTMDSS framework. The majority of counselors' data driven practices include Tier Two support for students in an academic capacity, and include few Tier Two supports for students' socio-emotional and career development. Lastly, counselors implement and monitor interventions through one-on-one meetings, summon students to tutorial for academic interventions, and enroll students in intervention courses embedded in the students' schedule. Data from this study show significant differences in the types of interventions offered at each site, and contribute to

the recommendations for future practice as well as the implications for educational leadership.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample Verbiage to Recruit Participants

I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at San José State University looking for high school counselors to participate in an interview about systems of support in high school counseling programs. As a high school counselor, you have been selected to take part in the dissertation research I plan to conduct in the fall and spring of the 2019-2020 school year. Your participation in this study will be key in collecting data through interviews about individual practices as a high school counselor.

It has been noted in the literature that counselor ratios in California are far above the ASCA national model's recommendation of 250 students to every one counselor. In addition, there have been more recent studies on the applications of a Multi-Tiered System of Support with respect to comprehensive school counseling programs. This dissertation study will focus on Tier Two interventions within a comprehensive school counseling program, and how the individual practices of school counselors identify Tier Two groups and implement Tier Two interventions.

The identity of participants of this study will be protected using pseudonyms. Ethical research practices will be used throughout the study and identifying markers will not be linked to interviewee responses. Like you, I am a mandated reporter, and required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when there is "reasonable cause to believe" that a child known may be abused or neglected. After beginning an interview, participants can decide to stop at any time or withdraw from the research all together. Approximate time spent for participants during interviews could range from 1 to 1.5 hours.

I do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation. Ethical procedures for academic research require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and have full understanding of how the information contained in the interview will be used. Should you choose to participate, a full consent form describing this in detail will be provided and discussed.

Appendix 2. Research Design

Problem of Practice: *The role of the school counselor is varied from school to school in X High School District. High School counselors have high student to counselor ratios, which means there may be subpopulations of students whose needs are not being served/met. To address these high ratios, counselors are encouraged to implement a MTSS, however, the implementation of MTSS may differ from site to site.*

Research Questions	Research Method	Planned Activity	Instruments Needed to Collect Data	Data Analysis Plan
RQ 1: What factors in a high school counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions?	Qualitative	Counselor Interviews	Interview Protocol	Constant Comparison Technique (CCT)
	Qualitative	Complete Post Interview	Field Notes	CCT
	Qualitative	Analyze Post Interview	Documents	CCT
RQ 2 and RQ 3: How do high school counselors determine Tier Two groups? Beyond identifying Tier Two groups in need, how do high school counselors implement and monitor a Tier Two system of support?	Qualitative	Counselor Interviews	Interview Protocol	CCT
	Qualitative	Complete Post Interview	Field Notes	CCT
	Qualitative	Analyze Post Interview	Documents	CCT

Appendix 3. Counselor Consent and Pre-Interview Intake

Name of the Researcher
Tram Nikki Dang, San José State University doctoral student. The researcher is a current high school counselor interested in studying high school counseling programs and interventions.
Supervisor: Rebeca Burciaga, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership & Chicana and Chicano Studies, San José State University.

Purpose
Given the multitude of roles and large caseloads of high school counselors, the purpose of this study is to determine how school counseling programs in one district determine Tier Two subpopulations that require additional support, and how such Tier Two supports and interventions are implemented.

Procedures
Participants will be recruited to participate and then agree to participate. Participants will have any questions answered by the researcher and electronically sign consent. A meeting will be scheduled. Participants will be asked to provide personal information regarding identified gender, age, years of experience, and personal information about professional experiences. The participant will be asked a series of questions about professional experiences prior to their role as school counselors, in addition to their current experiences as school counselors. The duration of each interview will be between 45 minutes to one hour. Two recording devices will be used to record interviews including a personal phone and a personal tape recorder. Interview recordings will be transcribed using a third-party vendor, http://www.rev.com/.

Potential Risks
There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to participants in this study. The participant has a right to refrain from answering a question at any time. To protect the anonymity of each participant, the research findings will not be shared with the [Silicon Valley High School District].

Potential Benefits
Potential benefits to the individual participants include personal reflection on practices as a school counselor. Findings from the study may benefit future counselors and counseling programs.

Compensation
There is no compensation that can be offered for participation.

Confidentiality

The identity of participants of this study will be protected using pseudonyms. Pseudonyms will be included in publication to maintain confidentiality. Pseudonyms with respect to the participant, school name, colleague names, and student names, will all be exercised to prevent connection between responses and participants. Ethical research practices will be used throughout the study and identifying markers will not be linked to interviewee responses. As a mandated reporter, the researcher is required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when there is "reasonable cause to believe" that a child known may be an abused or neglected.

Participant Rights

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative effect on your relations with [university name]. You also have the right to skip any question you do not wish to answer. This consent form is not a contract. It is a written explanation of what will happen during the study if you decide to participate. You will not waive any rights if you choose not to participate, and there is no penalty for stopping your participation in the study.

Questions or Problems

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study, please contact [researcher]. [email] or at [phone number].
- Complaints about the research may be presented to [program director], [director email], Director of the [name of program].
- For questions about participants' rights or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation in this study, please contact [name] Associate Vice President of the Office of Research, [university name], at [phone number].

Agreement

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to be a part of the study, that the details of the study have been explained to you, that you have been given time to read this document, and that your questions have been answered. You will receive a copy of this consent form for your records.

Intake Questions

1.	How do you describe your gender?
2..	What is your age?
1.	How would you describe your racial/ethnic background? Check as many as apply, or fill in if you would like to be more specific.
4.	List any professional experience/titles held prior to school counseling with years of experience in parenthesis. (If none, type N/A)
5.	What institution did you study to become a school counselor?
6.	Have you worked as a school counselor at other high schools? If so, where

	and how many years?
7.	What is your preferred position title?
8.	How many years have you worked at your current high school as a counselor?
9.	Approximately, how many students do you support on our caseload?
10.	How do you and your colleagues organize students to provide support?
11.	Are you responsible for supporting students with special needs? If so, approximately how many?
12.	Are you responsible for supporting EL students? If so, approximately how many?
13.	How familiar are you with the ASCA national model on a scale of 1 to 5?

Thank you for your responses. I look forward to learning more about your experience as a high school counselor. Your time and help are greatly appreciated!

Appendix 4. Interview Protocol

Part 1: Protocol foundations		
1	What is your RQ?	How do counselors determine what Tier Two groups to support? How do high school counseling programs implement and monitor Tier Two interventions? What factors in a counselor's role and or professional development contribute to the counselor's capacity to implement Tier Two interventions?
2	What topics do you intend to cover in the interview?	-The type of counseling training received by the interviewee -How the interviewee's school counseling program identifies Tier Two groups -What Tier Two groups are targeted in the interviewee's counseling program and why? -What are the times/frequencies that the interviewee meets with the Tier Two groups? -What are the barriers to implementing interventions? -What are the interventions that the interviewee administers to support the Tier Two groups?
3	How do you want to sequence them? Why?	The aforementioned order is both chronological and logical in thinking and practice.
4	Intended participant group. Brief description.	50% of the counselors in a school district. Approximately 10 high school counselors in total.
5	How are you going to support this participant group? Describe specific setting and linguistic moves.	I am going to be both flexible and explicitly mindful about the time that the interviews will take. I will work around the counselors' schedules and plan for them at least 2-3 weeks in advance.
6	How long will the interview last? Why?	45-60 minutes each. Each counselor will work at a different site with a different population of students and at different school sites. Therefore, it will be crucial for me to understand the dynamics that exist when the counselor determines Tier Two groups and how interventions are implemented.
7	What is your intended stance?	Cordial, respectful, and inviting. I want to build rapport with the counselor in order to obtain as much information as possible.

Part 2: Designing the protocol questions		
#	Question	Potential follow-up probe (s)?
1.	Please describe your decision to become a school counselor.	
2.	Did you enjoy your credential program? What were the pros and cons?	
3.	Describe what you enjoy most/least about your profession.	
4.	Describe your relationship with your counseling team.	
5.	Describe your school-counseling program. How are duties distributed? What curriculum is covered? What are counselors doing responsible for?	Does your school follow the ASCA model or MTSS framework explicitly?
6.	Are there special populations of students you are passionate about working with?	
7.	What is your understanding of Tier One, Tier Two, and Tier Three interventions?	
8.	What Tier Two groups are targeted in your counseling program?	Why does your program choose these groups?
9.	How does your school counseling program identify the students in these Tier Two groups?	Do you have any assistance with this? (Data, District?)
10.	What are the times/frequencies that you or other counselors meet with the Tier Two groups?	
11.	Are there other sub populations or Tier Two groups that are not being served? Elaborate.	
12.	Are there barriers to supporting any of the subpopulations discussed today? If so, what are they?	
13	Would it be okay to contact you if I have additional questions?	

Appendix 5. Post Interview Questions

#	Question
1.	Name
2.	What institution did you graduate from with your Bachelor's degree?
3.	What did you study for your undergraduate, Bachelor's degree?
4.	Through what program and or university did you earn your PPS credential?
5.	What year did you earn your PPS credential?
6.	What is the highest degree you have earned and in what major?
7.	From what institution and what year did you earn this degree?
8.	Are you a member of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA)?
9.	Are you a member of the (NACAC) National Association of College Admission Counseling?
10.	The following questions will ask about your level of confidence in your professional practice. Please rate your confidence levels in the following, as they pertain to your professional practice as a school counselor. Scale of 1-4, 4 being the highest. Your implementation of the National ASCA National Model in your current professional practice Your implementation of the MTMDSS Model in your current professional practice Your implementation of Tier One services in your current professional practice Your implementation of Tier Two services/interventions in your current professional practice Your implementation of Tier Three services/interventions in your current professional practice
11.	How often does your SAT Team meet? For how long?
12.	What school members serve on your SAT Team?