

A Systematic Review of School Counselor Content in ACA Journals

The school counseling profession has been shaped by the needs of students and legislation. School counseling started as career guidance for students when more families moved into cities during the industrial revolution (Kolbert et al., 2016). As the student population and mental health expanded, school counselors' roles evolved to include academic and social-emotional support. However, to align professional growth with student needs, school counselor representatives had to advocate for administrative support and funding. Advocacy and recognition have led to policies such as the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) and the 1995 Elementary School Counseling Demonstration Act. As a result, Government funding from legislation has highlighted the need for school counselors and provided the means for opening more school counselor positions (Kolbert et al., 2016). Thus, the more school counselors advocated for their roles, the legislation provided public universities with funding that could support hiring more school counselors. Ultimately, increasing the well-being of students' academic, career, and social-emotional development.

A content analysis of American Counseling Association (ACA) conventions noted that school counseling topics were part of the top 10 topics in 1985 but tapered off over the years (Heiwig & Schmidt, 2011). The authors described the frequency shift in school counseling topics as largely due to the separation of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) from ACA. Although ACA encourages school counselors to maintain membership and present uniformity across counseling specialties, the lack of school-related content is discouraging to school counselors. Moreover, school counselors must persistently advocate for their mental health-related expertise, roles, and responsibilities in the school setting. Maintaining school counseling-related content in ACA journals and conferences is salient to school counselor professional development, as it is for all other counseling specialties. Therefore, the current study is a systematic review that investigates school counseling-related frequency and content in the 21 ACA journals.