Guidance counseling services expenditures at Texas schools: A multiyear statewide investigation

American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities
Vol. 8, No. 1, 1-15, 2023
e-ISSN: 2520-5382

(Corresponding Author)

Tania M. Merik[1]
John R. Slate[2]

[1,2]*Sam Houston State University, USA.*
[1]*Email: tmm081@shsu.edu*
[2]*Email: jrs051@shsu.edu*

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the degree to which differences were present in the distribution of Guidance Counseling Services dollars spent per student at the elementary, middle, and high school levels for the 2009-2010 through the 2018-2019 school years in Texas. Texas statewide data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System for 10 school years. Specifically targeted in this multiyear investigation was the expenditure, out of the total amount of available dollars, of monies toward providing guidance counseling services to students. Through the use of inferential statistical procedures, statistically significant differences were established. The amount of school counseling dollars spent per pupil were highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. From the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year, expenditures for elementary, middle, and high schools across the State of Texas increased by only $60, $95, and $100, respectively. Implications and recommendations for future research were discussed.

Keywords: *Elementary school, Financial expenditures, Funding, Guidance counseling, High school, Middle school, Public education information management system, School counseling, School counselor, Texas education agency, Trend.*

DOI: 10.55284/ajssh.v8i1.820
Citation | Merik, T. M., & Slate, J. R. (2023). Guidance counseling services expenditures at Texas schools: A multiyear statewide investigation. *American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *8*(1), 1–15.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.
Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
History: Received: 26 October 2022/ Revised: 5 December 2022/ Accepted: 17 December 2022/ Published: 3 January 2023
Publisher: Online Science Publishing

Highlights of this paper

- Monies for Guidance Counseling services are statistically significantly different by school level.
- The most monies, on average, for Guidance Counseling Services are spent at the high school level.
- The fewest dollars, on average, for Guidance Counseling Services are spent at the elementary school level.
- Dollars for Guidance Counseling Services have not kept up with inflation over the last decade.

1. INTRODUCTION

The school counseling profession has undergone numerous changes in duties, responsibilities, and expectations throughout the last several decades. Initially, school counseling began with a purpose and focus solely on vocational counseling (Chandler, Burnham, & Dahir, 2008; Chandler et al., 2018; Martin & Robinson, 2011) and has developed into a more encompassing role that now includes an emphasis on social emotional learning, college and career planning, and providing responsive services to students and families (Chandler et al., 2008; Chandler et al., 2018; Martin & Robinson, 2011). As such, the American School Counselor Association (2012); American School Counselor Association (2021) changed the name of school counselors from *guidance counselors* to *professional school counselors* (Martin & Robinson, 2011). The term guidance counselor is now obsolete as professional school counselors are responsible for implementing comprehensive school counseling programs that assist students with their social and emotional growth, academic goals, as well as their career goals (American School Counselor Association, 2012, 2021). Present day school counselors are integral to providing students with wrap-around services that include the establishment of healthy behaviors, mindsets, and goals. With the assistance of school counselors, students learn skills in cooperation, collaboration, resilience, and tenacity, alongside important soft skills such as time management, and self-direction.

For students who are at risk of not graduating and for students in poverty, services provided by school counselors are critical. School counselors, however, often struggle with fully meeting the needs of students who are at risk and students in poverty due to frequently being assigned numerous non-counseling tasks in addition to their counseling duties (Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, & Marshall, 2001; Karatas & Kaya, 2015; Mason & Perera-Diltz, 2010). These non-counseling duties include responsibilities ranging from clerical tasks to administrative tasks as well as other tasks that are all outside of the role of the school counselor (Bringman, Mueller, & Lee, 2010; Karatas & Kaya, 2015; Lowery, Quick, Boyland, Geesa, & Mayes, 2018; Mason & Perera-Diltz, 2010).

Sadly, the inconsistency of school counselor duties has resulted in role uncertainty, confusion, as well as school counselor job dissatisfaction and burnout (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Cervoni & Delucia-Waack, 2011; Moyer, 2011). With the variability of counselor responsibilities and the importance of school counseling duties, the overall job satisfaction of school counselors needs to be considered, as job satisfaction can affect productivity and effectiveness (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2022). In a study about job satisfaction, Cervoni and Delucia-Waack (2011) addressed how time spent on duties recommended by the ASCA influenced the overall job satisfaction of high school counselors. From their sample of 175 secondary school counselors, of which more than 93% were employed in public schools, and varied from one year to 41 years of experience, they determined that more time spent on appropriate counseling duties created more job satisfaction for high school counselors. Conversely, more time spent on non-counseling tasks resulted in less job satisfaction for high school counselors (Cervoni & Delucia-Waack, 2011).

Similarly, Baggerly and Osborn (2006) analyzed factors that were predictive of career satisfaction and commitment levels of school counselors. From a survey in 2002 on school counselors from Florida, in which 1,280 responses were received, with over 60% of the participants being middle school counselors, Baggerly and Osborn

(2006) established the presence of statistically significant relationships between performing the appropriate job duties of counselors and counselor satisfaction levels. Counselors who were assigned appropriate duties according to the ASCA reported much higher levels of career satisfaction (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006) than counselors who were not assigned appropriate duties. As such, they documented that high levels of proper counseling duties resulted in higher levels of commitment by school counselors. Interestingly, secondary counselors perceived their jobs to be more stressful than elementary counselors (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006).

Also of importance is that researchers (e.g., (Kim & Lambie, 2018; Moyer, 2011)) have documented that school counselors are experiencing burnout. In a survey of 382 counselors, Moyer (2011) established that the more time school counselors spent on non-counseling related duties, the more likely that counselors were to exhibit signs of burnout. Moyer (2011) also determined that counselors who spent more time completing non-counseling related duties were less likely to exhibit empathy for their students. Overall, the school counseling profession may be especially susceptible to burnout due to role ambiguity, excessive job demands, and workload (Moyer, 2011).

In another article related to school counselor burnout, Kim and Lambie (2018) reviewed 18 published research studies between 2000 and 2018 on predictors of burnout and occupational-related stress in school counselors. Kim and Lambie (2018) ascertained that school counselors are at great risk for experiencing burnout due to large caseloads, multiple job demands including many non-counseling duties, limited support from administrators, and lack of resources. Those school counselors experiencing burnout also experience higher levels of job dissatisfaction, lower productivity, and lower levels of job commitment (Kim & Lambie, 2018).

Notably, as school counselor responsibilities grow increasingly more demanding, school counselor student caseloads continue to be high (National Association for College Admission Counseling & American School Counselor Association, 2018). With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas, the average student-to-school counselor ratio of 449:1 is nearly double the recommended caseload of 250:1 by the ASCA (National Association for College Admission Counseling & American School Counselor Association, 2018). At the same time, students' needs are also increasing as the number of students who are determined to be at risk and in poverty continue to rise (United States Department of Education, 2020).

In a recent Texas study, Merik and Slate (2021) established that middle and high schools with the highest percentages of students who were at risk had the same number of school counselors as schools with the lowest percentages of students who were at risk, although it is well documented that students who are at risk require more services to help guide academic achievement (Blount, 2012; Johnson & Perkins, 2009). The ever-growing needs of students is a cause for concern for counselors experiencing burnout, because it is well documented that high counselor caseloads and non-counseling duties can lead to counselors exhibiting less empathy for students, lower levels of job commitment, and lower levels of productivity (Kim & Lambie, 2018; Moyer, 2011). In short, schools and school districts may be missing opportunities to help students by overburdening their school counselors with high caseloads and duties that are outside of the purview of the role of the school counselor.

In regard to school campus leaders and to school district leaders, the frequent and well documented circumstance of school counselors being assigned non-counseling duties (Bringman et al., 2010; Karatas & Kaya, 2015; Lowery et al., 2018; Mason & Perera-Diltz, 2010) may be interpreted to mean that educational leadership preparation programs, specifically principal preparation programs, are not adequately training future principals regarding the proper tasks and responsibilities of the role of the school counselor (Benigno, 2017; Chandler et al., 2018). Principals are often the individuals who are charged with assigning duties to the school counselor. Therefore, principal training is imperative in ensuring that school counselors are assigned appropriate school counseling duties.

With a lack of adequate training for principals regarding the unique roles of school counselors and the benefits of having a comprehensive school counseling program (Benigno, 2017; Chandler et al., 2018; Mason & Perera-Diltz, 2010) it is not surprising that the importance of school counseling services appears to be infrequently prioritized by school and district leaders. The lack of prioritization of school counseling services is also displayed by the state legislature as the employment of school counselors is not mandated by the State of Texas. Consequently, some school districts in Texas do not have any full-time school counselors (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2019) because Texas law only requires that school districts employ at least one counselor for every 500 elementary students Texas Education Code (2013). More often than not, where and how money is spent is a good indication of how a school, school district, or organization places importance or value in its many programs. The apparent lack of prioritization by educational leaders and lawmakers regarding the benefits of school counseling services is evident in the large student-to-school counselor ratios and the frequent assignment of non-counseling duties to school counselors, which reduces the time spent on school counseling services.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The American School Counselor Association (2012); American School Counselor Association (2021) recommends a student to school counselor ratio of 250:1. Unfortunately, in the State of Texas, the average student to school counselor ratio is almost double the recommended ratio at 449:1 (National Association for College Admission Counseling & American School Counselor Association, 2018). Moreover, some school districts in Texas do not have any full-time school counselors (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2019) because Texas law only requires that school districts employ at least one counselor for every 500 elementary students Texas Education Code (2013).

Large school counselor caseloads and the nonexistence of school counselors in certain school campuses and school districts may be interpreted to mean that school counseling is not sufficiently funded in Texas. Researchers have documented that students who attend schools with lower student to school counselor ratios or with the recommended student to school counselor ratio are more likely to graduate high school and participate in postsecondary course-taking (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011; Goodman-Scott, Sink, Cholewa, & Burgess, 2018; Hurwitz & Howell, 2014; Jones, Ricks, Warren, & Mauk, 2019; Parzych, Donohue, Gaesser, & Chiu, 2019), have fewer disciplinary incidents, and better attendance rates, and higher SAT scores (Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, & Pierce, 2012; Parzych et al., 2019). However, researchers have also established that high student to school counselor ratios along with other factors including the performance of non-counseling duties have greatly contributed to school counselor burnout, lower school counselor effectiveness, and lower school counselor job commitment (Kim & Lambie, 2018; Moyer, 2011). Therefore, lack of sufficient funding for school counseling likely leads to a disservice to Texas students and their families, particularly those students who are at risk and students in poverty, as it relates to missed opportunities to assist with student social development, emotional well-being, mental health, academic achievement, and college and career planning.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

Three purposes were present in this article. The first purpose was to determine the monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services per pupil in real dollars and as a percent of the total monies at Texas elementary, middle, and high schools. The second purpose in this study was to determine the degree to which differences might be present in the monies spent and as a percent of the total monies per pupil for Guidance Counseling Services between the elementary, middle, and high schools. The third purpose was to ascertain the extent to which trends might exist in

monies spent and as a percent of monies spent at all three school levels across the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The high student to school counselor ratio may be interpreted to mean that Texas schools are not providing sufficient funding for school counseling services. This lack of adequate funding for school counseling services contributes to increased school counselor caseloads and school counselor burnout. Though the American School Counselor Association (2012); American School Counselor Association (2021) recommends a student to school counselor ratio of 250:1, the average student to school counselor ratio for Texas schools is nearly double the recommended ratio at 449:1 (National Association for College Admission Counseling & American School Counselor Association, 2018).

With the anticipated negative effects of the current Covid-19 pandemic on students' academic achievement, and social and emotional health, it is imperative that schools have sufficient funding for school counselors and school counseling related services to meet the growing needs of students. The combination of high student caseloads (National Association for College Admission Counseling & American School Counselor Association, 2018), performing numerous non-counseling duties (Karatas & Kaya, 2015; Mason & Perera-Diltz, 2010), and school counselor burnout (Kim & Lambie, 2018; Moyer, 2011), may have the unintended consequences of students going without much needed school counseling interventions unless schools, districts, and state leaders increase funding for school counseling services.

Simply stated, school counseling services have been well documented to positively influence the social and emotional health, and academic outcomes of students, as well as increase the likelihood of students engaging in postsecondary course taking (Bryan et al., 2011; Cholewa, Burkhardt, & Hull, 2015; Hurwitz & Howell, 2014; Jones et al., 2019). However, the research literature is lacking information regarding the funding of school counselors, school counseling services, and comprehensive school counseling programs. Additionally, the State of Texas does not require school counselors to be employed at every public school Texas Education Code (2013). Hence, students in Texas do not all have equal access to professional school counselors. This research study adds to the dearth of literature regarding funding for school counseling services and can be utilized by school, school district, and state leaders in making decisions regarding future financial expenditures for School Counseling Services for Texas public schools.

1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What are the monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services per pupil in real dollars and as a percent of the total monies in the 2009-2010 school year for Texas elementary schools?; (b) What are the monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services per pupil in real dollars and as a percent of the total monies in the 2009-2010 school year for Texas middle schools?; (c) What are the monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services per pupil in real dollars and as a percent of the total monies in the 2009-2010 school year for Texas high schools?; (d) What is the difference in monies spent per pupil for Guidance Counseling Services between the elementary, middle, and high school levels for the 2009-2010 school year in Texas?; (e) What is the difference in the percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services between the elementary, middle, and high schools levels for the 2009-2010 school year in Texas?; and (f) What is the trend in monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services for each of these school levels per pupil in real dollars and as a percent of the total monies across the 2009-2010 and 2018-2019 school years for Texas schools? The first five research questions were

answered separately for the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year, whereas the last question constituted all of these school years.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

A causal-comparative research design was present in this nonexperimental study (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). In this study, Texas public elementary, middle, and high schools constituted the three groups that comprised the independent variable. The monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services per pupil in real dollars and as a percent of the total monies at each school level during the aforementioned 10 school years were the dependent variables. The financial expenditures data were previously obtained through a Public Information Request form submitted to and fulfilled by the Texas Education Agency's Public Education Information Management System. The Public Education Information Management System collects and organizes data on all public schools and districts in Texas, including financial expenditures, enrollment, and student/staff demographics, among numerous other characteristics related to the daily activities of Texas public education (Texas Education Agency, 2018).

2.2. Participants and Instrumentation

Participants in this study were public elementary, middle, and high schools in Texas. Grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5 were designated as elementary schools, of which over 3,000 were present in this investigation. Data from approximately 1,000 middle schools were present in this analysis and consisted of Grades 6 through 8. With respect to high schools, more than 1,000 high schools, comprised of Grades 9 through 12, were present. For each of these three school levels, the dollars spent on Guidance and Counseling Services per student and as a percent of total funds at each school level across the 10 school years, 2009-2010 through 2018-2019, were examined.

According to the Texas Education Agency (2019), "Guidance/counseling services expenditures are those used for assessing and testing students' abilities, aptitudes, and interests; for counseling students with respect to career and educational opportunities; and for helping students establish realistic goals (function code 31)." Private and charter schools were not included in this analysis. The financial expenditures data were previously obtained through a Public Information Request to the Texas Education Agency's Public Education Information Management System. The data that were obtained were then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software for analysis.

3. RESULTS

Prior to conducting inferential statistical procedures, specifically Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedures, to answer the research questions presented above, checks for its underlying assumptions were made. Although some of the assumptions were not met, Field (2009) contends that the parametric ANOVA procedure is sufficiently robust that these violations can be withstood. Accordingly, use of parametric ANOVA procedures were justified.

3.1. Counseling Dollars Across School Years

Regarding the extent to which differences were present in the distribution of school counseling dollars spent per student at the elementary, middle, and high school levels for the 2009-2010 school year, the parametric ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 5229) = 63.62$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.02$. The effect size for this difference was small (Cohen, 1988). To determine which pairs of school levels differed from each other, post hoc procedures were conducted next. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that differences were present between all school pairwise comparisons. As revealed in Table 1, the average school counseling dollars spent per student was

highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. An average of about $61 less was spent in counseling dollars per student at elementary schools than middle schools, about $95 less was spent at the middle schools when compared with high schools, and about $156 less was spent at elementary schools per student when compared to the high school level.

Concerning the extent to which differences were present in the distribution of school counseling dollars spent per student at the elementary, middle, and high school levels for the 2010-2011 school year, the parametric ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 5258) = 27.40$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.01$. The effect size for this difference was small (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that differences were present between all school pairwise comparisons. The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. An average of about $58 less was spent in counseling dollars per student at elementary schools than middle schools, about $111 less was spent at the middle schools when compared with high schools, and about $169 less was spent at elementary schools per student when compared to the high school level. Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for counseling dollars spent per student for the 2009-2010 through the 2012-2013 school years.

School year and school level	*n*	*M*	*SD*
2009-2010			
Elementary schools	3,044	$229.77	$425.88
Middle schools	1,061	$290.84	$300.49
High schools	1,127	$385.95	$409.86
2010-2011			
Elementary schools	3,095	$243.96	$755.20
Middle schools	1,018	$302.08	$332.57
High schools	1,148	$413.31	$619.13
2011-2012			
Elementary schools	3,087	$219.45	$473.11
Middle schools	1,021	$279.92	$267.40
High schools	1,163	$412.39	$1,016.43
2012-2013			
Elementary schools	3,110	$214.53	$289.00
Middle schools	1,027	$286.25	$271.01
High schools	1,164	$392.82	$489.87

With respect to the 2011-2012 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 5268) = 42.23$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.02$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Revealed in Table 2 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis. In reference to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 5298) = 118.04$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = .04$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 5545) = 68.73$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0 .02$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Delineated in Table 2 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 5578) = 65.92$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.02$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average school counseling dollars spent per student was

highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for counseling dollars spent per student for the 2013-2014 through the 2016-2017 school years.

School year and school level	n	M	SD
2013-2014			
Elementary schools	3,272	$225.63	$384.31
Middle schools	1,103	$295.54	$343.44
High schools	1,173	$450.63	$992.42
2014-2015			
Elementary schools	3,369	$244.06	$532.06
Middle schools	1,038	$319.02	$354.60
High schools	1,174	$452.08	$669.74
2015-2016			
Elementary schools	3,157	$268.49	$914.83
Middle schools	1,083	$334.70	$389.61
High schools	1,239	$461.37	$815.94
2016-2017			
Elementary schools	3,363	$272.31	$621.46
Middle schools	1,069	$336.41	$356.35
High schools	1,203	$483.67	$778.58

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 5476) = 25.06$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.01$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis. In reference to the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant result was present, $F(2, 5632) = 51.62$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.02$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Revealed in Table 2 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2017-2018 school year, the difference was statistically significant, $F(2, 5473) = 76.29$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.03$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Revealed in Table 3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for counseling dollars spent per student for the 2017-2018 and the 2018-2019 school years.

School year and school level	n	M	SD
2017-2018			
Elementary schools	3,168	$277.63	$469.33
Middle schools	1,087	$331.63	$221.12
High schools	1,221	$485.23	$708.43
2018-2019			
Elementary schools	3,243	$290.73	$592.63
Middle schools	1,208	$385.64	$1,667.33
High schools	1,220	$486.61	$650.71

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 5668) = 20.16$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .01$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

3.2. Percent of Total Monies for Guidance Counseling Services Across School Years

Regarding the extent to which differences were present in the percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services at the elementary, middle, and high school levels for the 2009-2010 school year, the parametric ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 5229) = 158.84$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.06$. The effect size for this difference was moderate (Cohen, 1988). To determine which pairs of school levels differed from each other, post hoc procedures were conducted next. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that differences were present between all school pairwise comparisons. As delineated in Table 4, the average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the percent of total monies spent for guidance counseling services for the 2009-2010 through the 2012-2013 school years.

School year and school level	n	M%	SD%
2009-2010			
Elementary schools	3,044	3.21	1.34
Middle schools	1,061	3.86	1.50
High schools	1,127	4.10	2.10
2010-2011			
Elementary schools	3,095	3.26	1.27
Middle schools	1,018	4.03	1.54
High schools	1,148	4.18	2.10
2011-2012			
Elementary schools	3,087	3.22	1.26
Middle schools	1,021	4.03	1.54
High schools	1,163	4.23	2.17
2012-2013			
Elementary schools	3,112	3.26	1.28
Middle schools	1,027	4.06	1.60
High schools	1,165	4.32	2.11

Concerning the 2010-2011 school year, the parametric ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 5258) = 195.65$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.07$. The effect size for this difference was moderate (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that differences were present between all school pairwise comparisons. The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis. With respect to the 2011-2012 school year, a statistically significant result was present, $F(2, 5268) = 226.60$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.08$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Presented in Table 4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

In reference to the 2012-2013 school year, the result was statistically significant, $F(2, 5301) = 240.06$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.08$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Revealed in Table 4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 5545) = 290.44$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.10$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, the result was statistically significant, $F(2, 5578) = 337.18$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.11$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for the percent of total monies spent for guidance counseling services for the 2013-2014 through the 2016-2017 school years.

School year and school level	n	M%	SD%
2013-2014			
Elementary schools	3,272	3.24	1.29
Middle schools	1,103	3.99	1.61
High schools	1,173	4.44	2.15
2014-2015			
Elementary schools	3,369	3.24	1.30
Middle schools	1,038	4.12	1.57
High schools	1,174	4.53	2.25
2015-2016			
Elementary schools	3,157	3.30	1.26
Middle schools	1,083	4.14	1.88
High schools	1,239	4.55	2.41
2016-2017			
Elementary schools	3,363	3.39	1.20
Middle schools	1,069	4.29	1.90
High schools	1,203	4.61	2.17

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 5476) = 275.38$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.09$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level.

Delineated in Table 5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis. In reference to the 2016-2017 school year, the result was statistically significant, $F(2, 5632) = 318.56$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.10$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Revealed in Table 5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 5473) = 316.70$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.10$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for the percent of total monies spent for guidance counseling services for the 2017-2018 and the 2018-2019 school years.

School year and school level	*n*	*M%*	*SD%*
2017-2018			
Elementary schools	3,168	3.44	1.18
Middle schools	1,087	4.25	1.65
High schools	1,221	4.69	2.27
2018-2019			
Elementary schools	3,243	3.54	1.59
Middle schools	1,208	4.34	1.76
High schools	1,220	4.80	2.36

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, the parametric ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 5668) = 242.99$, $p < 0.001$, partial $n^2 = 0.08$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). The average percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. Table 6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

3.3. Trends in Counseling Dollars Across School Years

With respect to the trend in the amount of monies spent on Guidance Counseling Services per student across the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year for the elementary, middle, and high school levels, the monies spent per student remained relatively the same. At the elementary level, approximately a $60 increase occurred in the counseling dollars spent per student from the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year. At the middle school level, counseling dollars increased by about $95 during the 10 school years. At the high school level, the monies spent on counseling services per student increased by about $100 during the aforementioned 10 school years. Presented in Figure 1 is a line graph depicting the trend in monies spent on school counseling services per student during the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year.

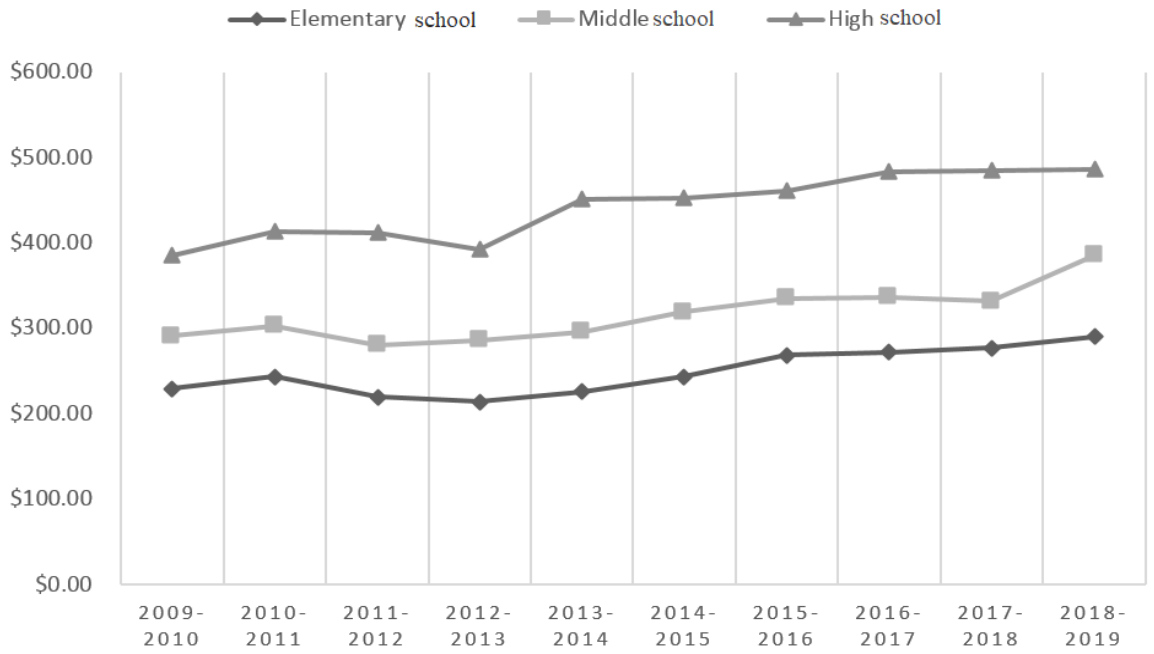

Figure 1. Guidance counseling services dollars spent per student for the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year.

3.4. Trends in Percent of Total Monies Spent for Guidance Counseling Services

Regarding the trend in the percent of total monies spent on Guidance Counseling Services across the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year for the elementary, middle, and high school levels, the percent of total monies spent remained nearly unchanged. At the elementary level, a 0.33% increase occurred in the counseling dollars spent from the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year. At the middle school level, the percent spent on counseling dollars increased by about 0.48% during the 10 school years. At the high school level, the percent of monies spent on counseling services increased by about 0.70% during the aforementioned 10 school years. Depicted in Figure 2 is a line graph depicting the trend in the percent of total monies spent on school counseling services during the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year.

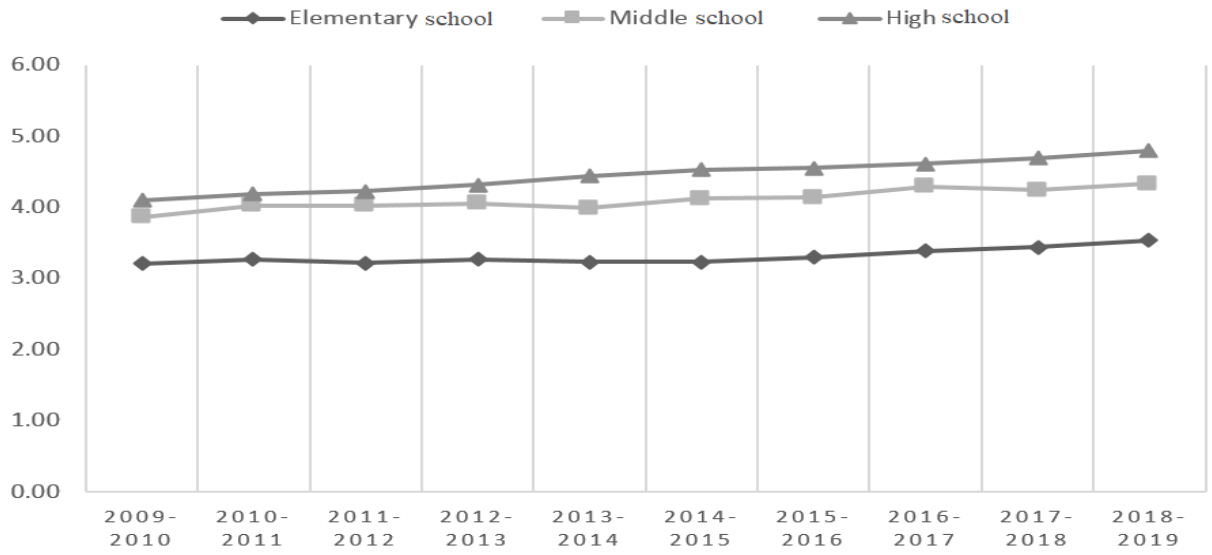

Figure 2. Percent of total monies spent on guidance counseling services for the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year.

4. DISCUSSION

In this investigation, the distribution of Guidance Counseling Services dollars spent per student at the elementary, middle, and high school levels for the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year was examined. Statistically significant differences were established in the amount of counseling dollars that were spent at all three school levels for all 10 of the school years. The average school counseling dollars spent per student was highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. At the elementary level, approximately a $60 increase occurred in the counseling dollars spent per student from the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year. At the middle school level, counseling dollars increased by about $95 during the 10 school years. At the high school level, the monies spent on counseling services per student increased by about $100 during the aforementioned 10 school years.

Also examined in this investigation was the percent of total dollars spent on Guidance Counseling Services for the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year. At the elementary level, a 0.33% increase occurred in the counseling dollars spent from the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year. At the middle school level, the percent spent on counseling dollars increased by about 0.48% during the 10 school years. At the high school level, the percent of monies spent on counseling services increased by about 0.70% during the aforementioned 10 school years.

4.1. Implications for Policy and for Practice

School counselor caseloads in Texas continue to far exceed the recommended student-to-school counselor ratios recommended by the ASCA (National Association for College Admission Counseling & American School Counselor Association, 2018) . The high student-to-school counselor ratio may be interpreted to mean that Texas schools are not providing sufficient funding for school counseling services. The average school counseling dollars spent per student at the elementary, middle, and high school levels increased only by about $60, $95, and $100 respectively, from the 2009-2010 to the 2018-2019 school years.

Funding for Guidance Counseling Services at the elementary school level was statistically significantly lower than funding at the middle and high school levels. This lower funding is particularly concerning as elementary counselors are vital in helping young children to develop healthy coping skills, as well as other aptitudes associated with social and emotional learning, that then contributes to student success at the secondary level (American School

Counselor Association, 2012, 2021). The ability of school counselors to intervene and provide assistance in the younger grade levels will help to improve student outcomes in the older grade levels.

Not yet taking into account inflation, the minor increase in per pupil spending for Guidance Counseling Services during the past 10 years and the persistently high caseloads for school counselors were interpreted to mean that funding is insufficient for Guidance Counseling Services in Texas schools. Accordingly, school leaders, school district leaders, policymakers, and state legislators are encouraged to increase funding for Guidance Counseling Services for all school levels so that schools, in particular school counselors, can more aptly support and provide services to students in the areas of academic achievement, social and emotional health, as well as college and career readiness. The needs of Texas students have increased as the number of students who were determined to be at risk as well as the number of students who were in poverty have also increased within the last 10 years (United States Department of Education, 2020). However, the monies spent on school counseling services have only minimally increased or, in fact, have not increased once inflation is taken into consideration. In addition, with the ongoing expected and unforeseen negative consequences on students and families brought upon by the Covid-19 pandemic (Fair Health, 2021), the need for sufficient funding for Guidance Counseling Services grows ever pressing so that schools are able to meet the increasing needs of students adequately.

4.2. Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the results of this investigation, several recommendations are possible for future research. First, researchers are encouraged to replicate this study using other expenditure categories and to compare the rates of increase or decrease of the other expenditures to the expenditures for Guidance Counseling Services. Second, researchers are recommended to compare the number of school counselors at each school level. Third, researchers are encouraged to replicate this study in other states and investigate any trends regarding school counseling expenditures in public schools across the country. Fourth, researchers are encouraged to replicate this study to include private and charter schools. Lastly, researchers are also encouraged to review the tables in this study and investigate the large standard deviations for each school level as these large numbers suggest that schools within Texas are far from being uniform in regard to per pupil expenditures for Guidance Counseling Services at each respective school level.

5. CONCLUSION

In this Texas statewide analysis, Guidance Counseling Services dollars spent per student at the elementary, middle, and high school levels were examined for the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school years. Also investigated was the percent of total dollars spent on Guidance Counseling Services for the same 10 school years. Statistically significant differences were documented in the amount of dollars spent per student and the percent of total monies spent for Guidance Counseling Services for all three school levels for all 10 of the aforementioned school years. The amount of school counseling dollars spent per student were highest at the high school level, followed by the middle school level, and were lowest at the elementary school level. As the school level decreased, the amount of school counseling dollars spent per student were statistically significantly lower. From the 2009-2010 school year through the 2018-2019 school year, expenditures for elementary, middle, and high schools across the State of Texas increased by only $60, $95, and $100, respectively.

REFERENCES

American School Counselor Association. (2012). *The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs* (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: American School Counselor Association.

American School Counselor Association. (2021). School counselor roles & ratios. Retrieved from: https://www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/School-Counselor-Roles-Ratios.

Baggerly, J., & Osborn, D. (2006). School counselors' career satisfaction and commitment: Correlates and predictors. *Professional School Counseling, 9*(3), 197-205. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x0500900304

Benigno, S. (2017). Counselor perceptions: Let us do our job! *Journal of Education and Learning, 6*(4), 175-180. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6n4p175

Blount, T. (2012). Dropout prevention: Recommendations for school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling, 10*(16), 1-34.

Bringman, N. M., Mueller, S. M., & Lee, S. M. (2010). Educating future school principals regarding the role of professional school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling, 8*(3), 1-21.

Bryan, J., Moore-Thomas, C., Day-Vines, N. L., & Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2011). School counselors as social capital: The effects of high school college counseling on college application rates. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 89*(2), 190-199. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00077.x

Cervoni, A., & Delucia-Waack, J. (2011). Role conflict and ambiguity as predictors of job satisfaction in high school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling, 9*(1), 1-30.

Chandler, J., Burnham, J., & Dahir, C. (2008). Counseling versus noncounseling duties: Examining the past and present in school counseling. *Alabama Counseling Association Journal, 34*(1), 44-58.

Chandler, J. W., Burnham, J. J., Riechel, M. E., Dahir, C. A., Stone, C. B., Oliver, D. F., & Bledsoe, K. G. (2018). Assessing the counseling and non-counseling roles of school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling, 16*(7), 1-33.

Cholewa, B., Burkhardt, C., & Hull, M. (2015). Are school counselors impacting underrepresented students' thinking about postsecondary education? A nationally representative study. *Professional School Counseling, 19*(1), 144-154. https://doi.org/10.5330/1096-2409-19.1.144

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Fair Health. (2021). *The impact of COVID-19 on pediatric mental health: A study of private healthcare claims.* Retrieved from A Fair Health White Paper March, 2, 2021:

Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fitch, T., Newby, E., Ballestero, V., & Marshall, J. L. (2001). Future school administrators' perceptions of the school counselor's role. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 41*(2), 89-99. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2001.tb01273.x

Goodman-Scott, S. E., Sink, C. A., Cholewa, B. E., & Burgess, M. (2018). An ecological view of school counselor ratios and student academic outcomes: A national investigation. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 96*(4), 388-398. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12221

Hurwitz, M., & Howell, J. (2014). Estimating causal impacts of school counselors with regression discontinuity designs. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 92*(3), 316-327. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2014.00159.x

Johnson, A. F., & Perkins, G. W. (2009). What we know about at-risk students: Important considerations for principal and counselor leadership. *NASSP Bulletin, 93*(2), 122-134. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636509340692

Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2020). *Educational research: Quantitative qualitative and mixed approaches* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jones, S., Ricks, J., Warren, J., & Mauk, G. (2019). *Exploring the career and college readiness of high school students serviced by RAMP and non-RAMP school counseling programs in North Carolina.* Retrieved from ASCA Research Report:

Karatas, K., & Kaya, I. (2015). An investigation of the perceptions of school administrators towards the roles and duties of school counselors. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 15*(61), 181-198. https://doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2015.61.10

Kim, N., & Lambie, G. W. (2018). Burnout and implications for professional school counselors. *Professional Counselor, 8*(3), 277-294. https://doi.org/10.15241/nk.8.3.277

Lapan, R. T., Gysbers, N. C., Stanley, B., & Pierce, M. E. (2012). Missouri professional school counselors: Ratios matter especially in high-poverty schools. *Professional School Counseling, 16*(2), 108-116. https://doi.org/10.5330/psc.n.2012-16.108

Lowery, K., Quick, M., Boyland, L., Geesa, R. L., & Mayes, R. D. (2018). It wasn't mentioned and should have been": Principals' preparation to support comprehensive school counseling. *Journal of Organizational & Educational Leadership, 3*(2), 1-32.

Lunenburg, F. C., & Ornstein, A. O. (2022). *Educational administration: Concepts and practices* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Martin, P., & Robinson, S. (2011). Chapter 1: Transforming the school counseling profession. In B. Erford (Ed.) Transforming the school counseling profession. In (pp. 1-18). New York: Pearson Education.

Mason, K. L., & Perera-Diltz, D. M. (2010). Factors that influence pre-service administrators' view of appropriate school counselor duties. *Journal of School Counseling, 8*(5), 1-28.

Merik, T. M., & Slate, J. R. (2021). Differences in school counselors employed by percentage of students at risk: A Texas statewide investigation. In J. E. Kelly (Ed.), Teachers and principals: Global practices, challenges and prospects. In (pp. 149-165). New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Moyer, M. (2011). Effects of non-guidance activities supervision and student-to-counselor ratios on school counselor burnout. *Journal of School Counseling, 9*(5), 1-31.

National Association for College Admission Counseling. (2019). State-by-state student-to-counselor ratio maps by school district. NACAC Research & Report. Retrieved from: https://www.nacacnet.org/news--publications/Research/.

National Association for College Admission Counseling, & American School Counselor Association. (2018). State-by-state student-to-counselor ratio report: 10 year trends. NACAC Research & Report. Retrieved from: https://www.nacacnet.org/news--publications/Research/.

Parzych, J., Donohue, P., Gaesser, A., & Chiu, M. (2019). *Measuring the impact of school counselor ratios on student outcomes.* Retrieved from ASCA Research Report.

Texas Education Code, S. B. N. (2013). Acts of texas legislature 83rd regular session 2013 amends: Tex. Educ. Code § 33.002. Retrieved from: https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.33.htm.

Texas Education Agency. (2018). Texas public education information management system. Retrieved from: https://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/Data_Submission/PEIMS/Public_Education_Information_Management_System.

Texas Education Agency. (2019). About the 2018-2019 PEIMS actual financial data Reports. Retrieved from: https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/school.finance/forecasting/financial_reports/AbtAct19.docx.

United States Department of Education, T. P. A. P. (2020). Improving basic programs operated by local educational agencies. Retrieved from: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html.