

**Evaluating the Impact of School Counseling
on Student Achievement and Behavior:
Florida Research Summary**

Three studies have been conducted, in two Florida counties, to determine the impact of school counseling services on student achievement and behavior.

The first study was in Broward County and took place during the school year 2000-2001. The project was titled **Developing Academic and Social Competence** and was funded by an Annenberg/Henderson Foundation Grant. A follow-up study was completed in 2001-2002.

A third study titled **Student Impact Evaluation Tied to School Counseling Services** has been completed in Pasco County, 2001-2002, and a fourth study is currently underway there. The Pasco studies are funded by a grant from the Florida Department of Education. All four studies involved school counselors implementing the Student Success Skills model. The Department of Counselor Education faculty of Florida Atlantic University have provided the training for these studies.

The goal of these projects was to increase direct counseling services to students in order to increase academic achievement and school success behavior.

The overall conclusion of the three completed studies is captured in a quote by one of the researchers:

"When school counselors used research and national standards based approaches, in six Broward County and thirty Pasco County schools, --elementary, middle and high, students improved in both academic achievement and in school success behaviors".

Dr. Greg Brigman

Approximately 180 students (30 from six schools) participated in each of the two Broward County studies. In Pasco County, approximately 260 students (12 from 30 schools) participated. Roughly half of these students were elementary and half middle and high school. They were selected randomly from those scoring between the 25th and 50th percentile on the NRT FCAT.

The two primary interventions, provided by school counselors, were structured group counseling and classroom guidance. Both interventions focused upon research based school success skills. Collaboration between school counselors, administrators, teachers and parents to focus upon these skills was also highlighted.

The two measures used to evaluate the impact of the school counseling services were FCAT NRT math and reading scores and a behavior rating scale ("The School Social Behavior Scale" which measures three essential school success skills: Academic skills, social skills, and self-management skills).

Students Gain When Counselors Focus on School Success Skills

One way to look at the overall results of these three studies is to answer the questions “*Did the school counseling services make a difference? Specifically, how many students improved and how much?*” The results from all three of the completed studies are very similar:

Standardized test scores went up

In all three studies approximately ,seven out of every ten students improved in Math FCAT scores. The average amount of improvement was twenty percentile points. The comparison grade levels for Broward and Pasco and the state averaged 1-3 point gains.

Five out of every ten improved in Reading FCAT scores. The average amount of improvement was fifteen percentile points. The comparison grade levels for Broward and Pasco and the state averaged 0-3 point gains.

Student behavior improved

Teachers rated student behavior related to school success (in the areas of academic, social, and self- management skill)s. In all three studies approximately, seven out of every ten students improved. The average amount of improvement was eighteen percentile points on a nationally normed instrument.

Why focus on these skills?

The school success skills in this project where selected based upon three comprehensive reviews of research: Masten and Coatsworth (1998), reviewed 25 years of research to determine the most critical factors associated with children and adolescents developing the academic and social competence needed to be successful. Hattie, Biggs and Purdie (1996) reviewed 10 years of research on “The effects of learning skills interventions on student learning”. Wang (1994), reviewed 50 years of research looking at “What helps students learn”.

All three reviews found a very similar collection of skills which were considered to be most critical to student success. These skills include:

1. Cognitive and meta cognitive skills such as goal setting, progress monitoring and memory skills
2. Social skills such as interpersonal skills, social problem solving, listening, and team-work skills.
3. Self management skills such as managing attention, motivation and anger

Other benefits of these projects have included:

1. *A marked increase in direct counseling services to all students*
2. *Improved perception of school counselor's role by teachers.*
3. *Increased job satisfaction reported by school counselors*

For more information contact

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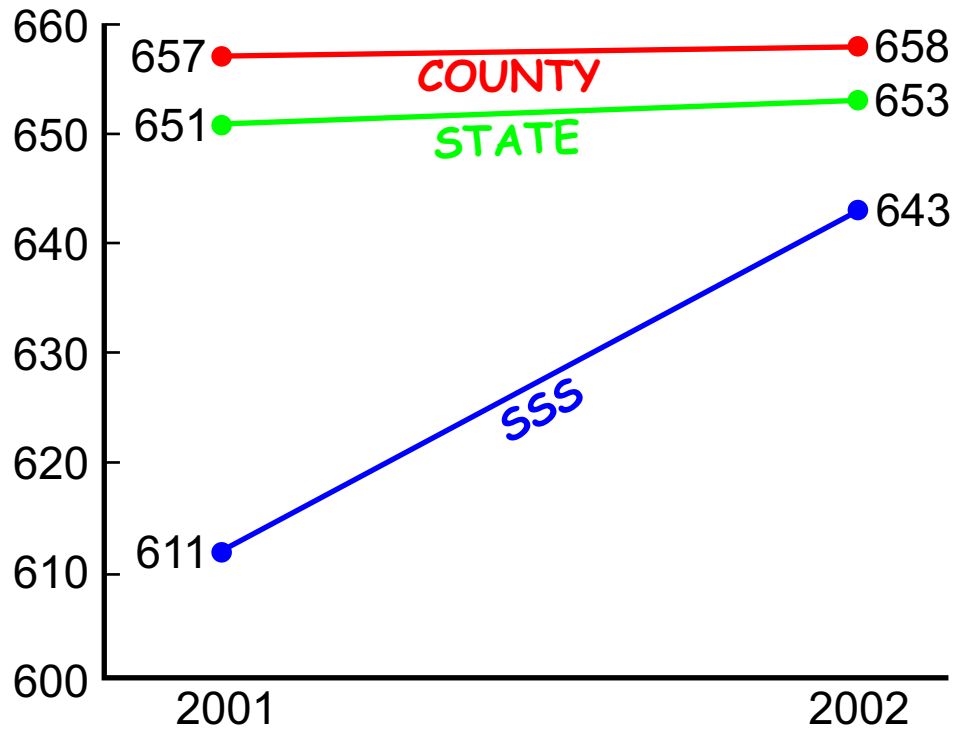
FCAT NRT scale score means

School Counselors

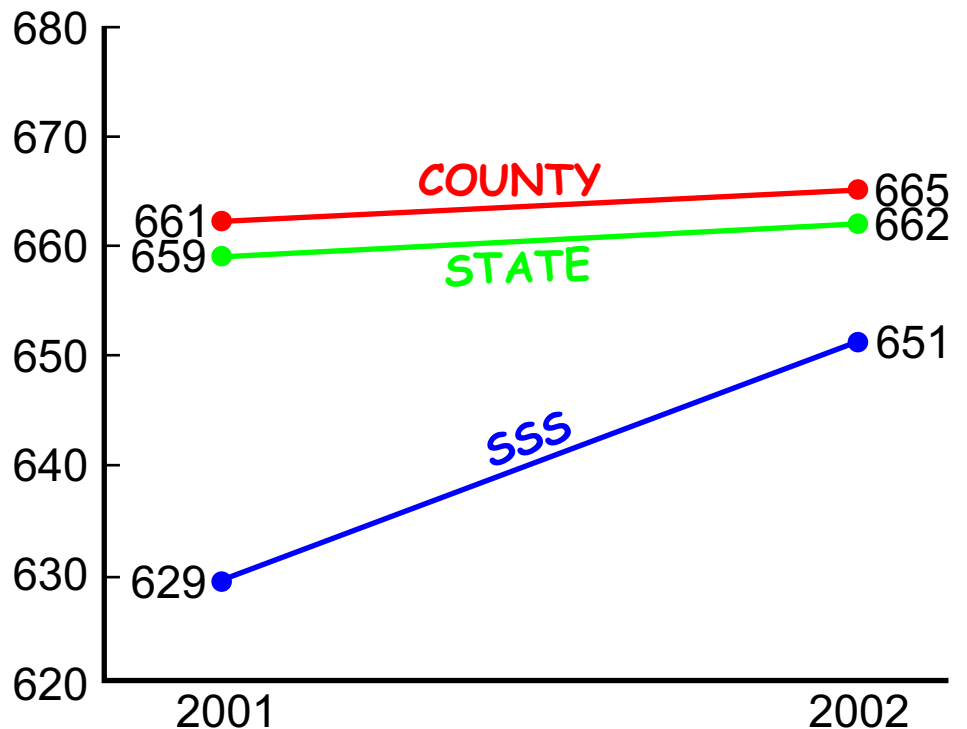
Closing the Achievement GAP

HELPING STUDENTS
DEVELOP THE ACADEMIC,
SOCIAL AND SELF-
MANAGEMENT SKILLS
THEY NEED TO SUCCEED

5th Grade Math



6th Grade Reading



FCAT NRT scale score means

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