National Association for College Admission Counseling

A National Look at the High School Counseling Office

What Is It Doing and What Role Can It Play in Facilitating Students' Paths to College?

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Introduction

Between January and October of 2013, nearly 3 million Americans between the ages of 16 and 24 graduated from high school. By October of that year, just two-thirds had enrolled in college.[1]

This report uses recently released nationally representative High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09) data from Spring 2012 to examine American high schools' counseling departments and the factors related to high school juniors'[2] actions, plans, and beliefs surrounding their eventual college enrollment. More specifically, Part I of this report focuses on what high schools and their counseling offices are doing to help students make a transition to postsecondary education. To do so, it presents data on principals' priorities for their counselors, how counselors are assigned, whether schools have college-focused counselors, counselors' time commitments, counselors' college preparation activities, whether schools follow their students beyond high school, students' and parents' interactions with counselors, and students' perceptions of counselors' influence on their thinking about postsecondary education.

To better understand the extent to which these counseling characteristics differ among high schools, this study uses descriptive statistics to compare these outcomes by several key high school dimensions: school type (public or private), school size, school locale, schools' college admissions test score quintile,[3] and the percentage of the student body at public high schools receiving free or reduced-price lunch (as a proxy for low-income students' representation).[4] The precise categories used for these school characteristics and their percentages are noted in Appendix Table 1.

Part II of this report aims to identify the factors related to students' taking actions, making plans, and having beliefs by the spring of their junior year that may facilitate their postsecondary enrollment after high school. The first half of Part II focuses on students' actions in exploring college options and their plans to enroll. Specifically, it discusses whether students 1) had explored college options through the Internet or college guides; 2) had attended a program at, or taken a tour of, a college campus; and 3) planned to enroll in a bachelor's degree program in Fall 2013 (which would be the fall after their high school graduation assuming normal academic progress).[5]

Next, given that perceptions about college affordability, financial aid eligibility, and financial aid receipt influence students' college decisions, the second half of Part II centers on students' perceptions and plans related to the costs of college and financial aid. More precisely, it examines 1) students' perceptions of college affordability; 2) their beliefs about their ability to qualify for need-based financial aid; and 3) their plans to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Part II of this report first presents descriptive statistics for each outcome examined. Then, in order to establish which counseling characteristics and other factors appear to shape these outcomes in the face of less mutable student characteristics, it shows results from regression analyses.

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[1] *College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2013 High School Graduates,* Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved May 31, 2014, from http://www.bls.gov/news.release/hsgec.nr0.htm.

[2] See the Data and Methods Appendix for more detail on the sample.

[3] Schools' college admissions test score quintile results are based on the average SAT or ACT score of the school's graduating senior test-takers. ACT scores were converted to equivalent SAT scores, and quintiles were calculated using the schools in the sample that were not missing data on this measure. See Appendix Table 1 for the scores that fall within each quintile.

[4] Free and reduced-price lunch information was gathered from administrators. Analyses were limited to public schools because some private schools include lunch as part of the cost of attendance, making their responses less useful as an indicator of students' poverty.

[5] See the Data and Methods Appendix for more information on students' grade level at the time of the survey.

Executive Summary

PRINCIPALS' PRIORITIES FOR COUNSELORS

- When asked to choose from four options, just over half of principals (55 percent) selected the option, "helping students prepare for postsecondary schooling," as their top priority for their schools' counseling office.

ASSIGNMENT OF COUNSELORS AND COLLEGE-FOCUSED COUNSELORS

- About 57 percent of counselors reported that their schools assigned counselors to students by students' last name.
- Less than two-fifths of counselors indicated that their school had a counselor whose primary responsibility was college applications or had a counselor whose primary responsibility was college selection.

COUNSELORS' TIME COMMITMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- About half of counselors (54 percent) reported that their counseling department spent less than 20 percent of their time on college readiness, selection, and applications.
- Most counselors (90 percent or more) indicated that their schools offered information on college admissions tests, colleges, and the basics of the financial aid process. That said, the percentage of students who took advantage of these types of help was far lower.

FOLLOWING STUDENTS' OUTCOMES BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

- About 58 percent of schools tracked what their former students did after high school in some way.
- Despite increased attention and federal funding to help build and develop state longitudinal databases, it was still much more common for schools to use a student or alumni survey (49 percent) than a state or national database (22 percent) to do so.
- Thirty-seven percent of schools collected information specifically on whether their former students who enrolled in college persisted beyond their first year.

STUDENTS' AND PARENTS' INTERACTIONS WITH SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND HIRED COLLEGE COUNSELORS

- By the spring of students' junior year, almost two-thirds of students (63 percent) and just over half of parents (51 percent) had talked with a school counselor about (the student's) options for life after high school.
- Fewer students and parents had spoken with a hired counselor: 13 percent and 15 percent, respectively.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS' AND HIRED COUNSELORS' INFLUENCE

- Consistent with other research, students were most likely to select their parents as most influential in their thinking about their education after high school (42 percent). While relatively few students chose a high school counselor (3 percent) or a hired counselor (less than 1 percent) as most important in shaping their educational vision, it is important to keep in mind that counselors may be more influential in providing information about the steps required to realize this vision.

THE ROLE OF COUNSELING CHARACTERISTICS IN STUDENTS' ACTIONS, PLANS, AND PERCEPTIONS SURROUNDING COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

- Controlling for a multitude of factors, students' speaking with a counselor about options for life after high school was positively related to their having searched for college options, having visited a college campus for a program or tour, planning to enroll in a bachelor's degree program after completing high school, and planning to complete a FAFSA.
- Other factors that counselors may be able to influence were also statistically significant even after controlling for numerous factors. Students' participating in a program that provides college preparation, counting more than half of their close friends as planning to attend a four-year college, and having parents who expected them to enroll in college after finishing high school were all positively associated with an array of key outcomes that could foster eventual college enrollment.

Part I What Is Happening in High Schools' Counseling Offices?

This portion of the report provides a picture of U.S. high schools' counseling offices in 2012 by addressing the following questions: What priorities did principals set for their schools' counseling departments? How were counselors assigned to students? How frequently did schools have a counselor whose primary responsibility is college applications and/or college selection? How much of counselors' time was spent on college activities compared with other responsibilities? What services did counseling departments offer to help students prepare for their transition to college, and to what degree did students take advantage of these services? Did counselors or schools follow their students beyond high school to see how they fare? And, finally, to what extent did students and parents report interacting with school counselors and being influenced by them?

PRINCIPALS' PRIORITIES FOR COUNSELORS

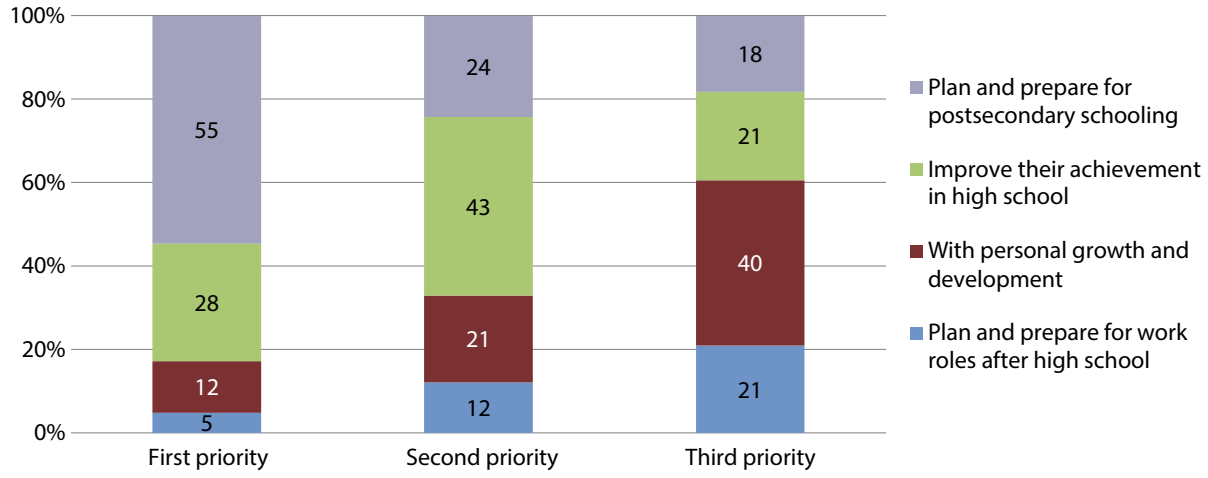
Principals set the tone for a school and can shape goals not just for teachers but also for counselors. Figure 1 presents principals' rankings of various priorities for the counseling program in their schools. When given the four options shown, a small majority of principals (55 percent) selected helping students "plan and prepare for postsecondary schooling" as their first priority. They selected assisting students "improve their achievement in high school" next most often, at 28 percent, and chose aiding students "with personal growth and development" or helping students "plan and prepare for work roles" less frequently, at 12 percent and 5 percent, respectively. About a quarter of principals (24 percent) chose preparing students for postsecondary education as their second priority, and 18 percent suggested it was their third priority. Interestingly, principals' ranking of postsecondary education as a priority for their counseling departments did not differ significantly by any of the school characteristics examined in this report (school type, school size, school locale, schools' college admissions test score quintile, or, at public high schools, the percentage of the student body receiving free or reduced-price lunch). In addition, save one exception noted in footnote 8, all of the subsequent outcomes analyzed in Part I did not differ significantly by this principal ranking either.

ASSIGNMENT OF COUNSELORS

The way in which schools assign counselors to students may also influence counselors' ability to advise students well as they prepare for college. There are several methods a school might employ. For example, schools could assign counselors to students alphabetically, according to students' last names; by grade level (counselor A counsels ninth graders each year, counselor B counsels tenth graders, etc.); by incoming class (Counselor A has the class of 2013, Counselor B has the class of 2014, etc.); or by learning communities within schools.[6] In schools with only one counselor, usually small schools, all students would be assigned to that counselor. Some schools, of course, combine these strategies: for example, Counselor A is assigned to students slated to graduate in 2013 whose last names begin with A–G and works with these students throughout their high school careers.[7]

Figure 1

Percentage of Principals Reporting the Following Priorities for Their School's Counseling Program: Helping Students…



NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

[6] Examples of learning communities provided in the survey question included schools-within-a-school, pods, and houses.

[7] About 2 percent of counselors indicated that their school made assignments by last name and grade level, and another 2 percent indicated that their school used last name and incoming class.

Figure 2 presents the assignment method that schools chose. The majority of counselors (57 percent) reported that their schools assigned counselors to students by students' last name. Two-fifths (39 percent) indicated that one counselor was assigned to all students in the school. Other approaches occurred less frequently. First, though counselors' knowledge and familiarity with college admissions and financial aid might be better if counselors were assigned to a specific grade level and thus more regularly addressed these specific grade-level topics, only 27 percent of counselors were assigned in this way. And while assigning counselors to an incoming class throughout high school or by learning community may help counselors get to know their students' individual needs better, schools pursued these approaches even less often (16 percent and 13 percent, respectively). The ways in which counselors were assigned differed significantly by school type. Public schools were more likely than private schools to sort students by students' last name or by learning community, while private high schools were more likely to assign counselors to all students or to a specific grade level.

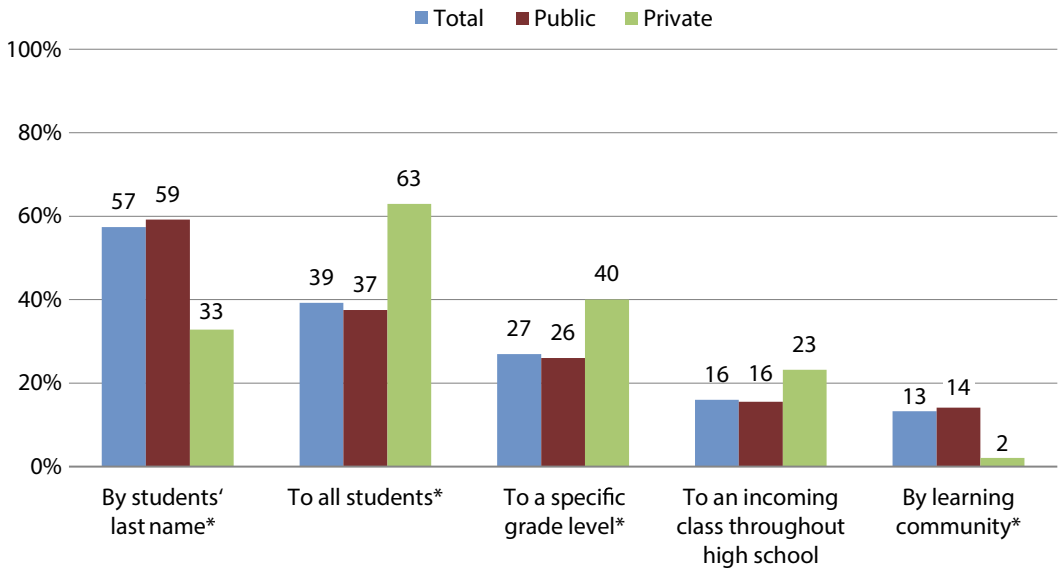
Counselor assignment strategies varied with other school characteristics as well. Some of these school characteristics are correlated and inform the results found in Appendix Table 2. Small schools and rural schools followed one path, while larger schools and urban and suburban schools followed another. Specifically, counselors were more apt to be charged with seeing all students in schools with fewer than 500 students (compared with schools in general) and in rural schools (compared with urban and suburban schools). In contrast, assigning counselors by students' last name was more common in the three larger school size categories (than in the two smaller school size categories) and in urban and suburban schools (than in towns and rural schools). Schools with higher college admissions test scores and lower poverty rates were also more likely to try certain methods of assignment, while schools with lower test scores and higher poverty rates pursued other tactics. For example, schools in the second highest test score quintile (compared with schools in the bottom two quintiles) and public schools in the lowest poverty rate category (compared with the highest two categories) were more likely to assign students by last name. Schools in the lowest test score quintile (compared with the second and fourth quintiles) and public schools in the highest poverty rate category (compared with the second and third categories) were more likely to assign counselors by learning community.

COLLEGE-FOCUSED COUNSELORS

Counseling departments that include at least one counselor who is specifically focused on college applications or college selection may be better able to smooth students' path to college than counseling departments where all counselors take on all of the issues that come to the department. Figure 3 sheds light on the percentage of schools that have counselors with a specialized focus. Thirty-nine percent of counselors indicated that their schools had a counselor whose primary responsibility was college *applications*. When asked separately whether their school had a counselor dedicated primarily to college *selection*, 37 percent agreed. To put those percentages into perspective, the figure illustrates that a similar percentage of schools had at least one counselor focused

Figure 2

Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Counselors at Their School Were Assigned in Various Ways, by School Type



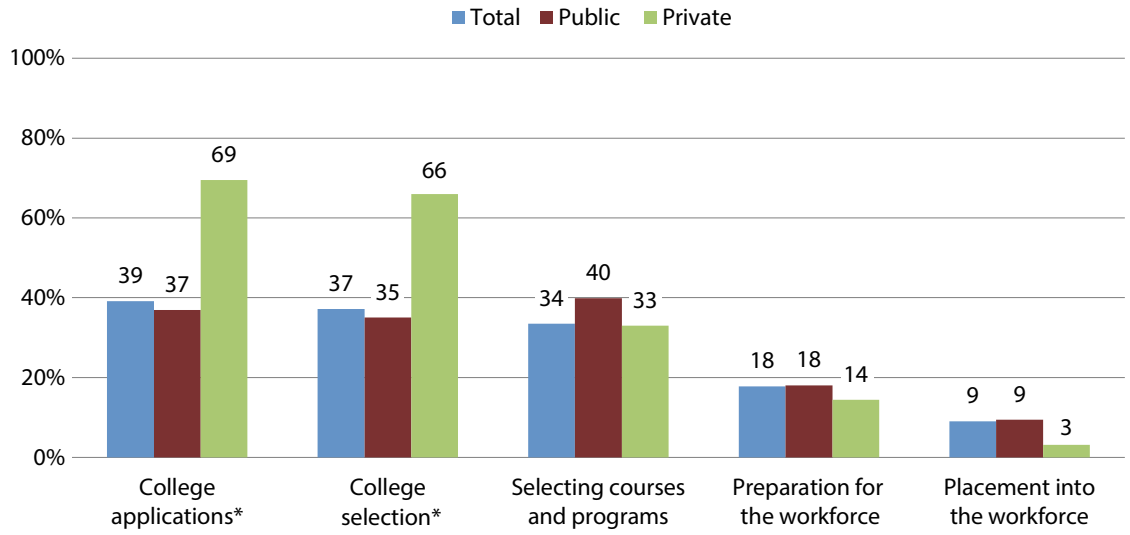
*Differences by school type that are statistically significant at the .05 level or below.

NOTES: Counselor respondents were able to select more than one assignment method. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 3

Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Had One or More Counselors Whose Primary Responsibility Was Assisting Students with the Following, by School Type



*Differences by school type that are statistically significant at the .05 level or below.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

on helping students select courses and programs (34 percent). That said, schools with a counselor charged mainly with preparing students for the workforce or a counselor dedicated mainly to helping students get placed into the workforce were less common (18 percent and 9 percent, respectively).

Focusing on the first two college-related measures of interest shown in the figure, public schools were roughly 30 percentage points less likely than private schools to have a counselor focused on applications or a counselor focused on selection. Also, as Appendix Table 3 shows, urban schools were about 20 percentage points more likely than schools in towns to have a counselor whose primary responsibility was college selection.

COUNSELORS' TIME COMMITMENTS

Counselors' time commitments also shape their ability to advise students on the transition to college. The study asked counselors to estimate the percentage of time the counseling department in their school spent on various activities during the previous school year (2010–11). The first bar in Figure 4 shows that 16 percent of counselors felt that college readiness, selection, and applications took up 10 percent or less of their departments' time; 38 percent estimated it took 11 percent to 20 percent; and just under half (46 percent) put that figure at more than 20 percent. While high school course choice/scheduling as well as academic development also tended to take up a fair amount of counselors' time (11 percent or more for at least 70 percent of departments), the bottom category in the rest of the bars highlights that more than 50 percent of counselors felt that most other activities required 10 percent or less of their staff's total work hours.

The percentage of counselors reporting that their schools' counseling staff spent more than 20 percent of their time on college-related activities differed with regard to just two of the school characteristics emphasized in this report: school type and public schools' poverty rate.[8] Public schools' counseling departments were much less likely than private schools' counseling departments to devote more than 20 percent of their time to college readiness, selection, and applications (Figure 5). That said, counseling staff at public schools in the lowest poverty rate category were more likely than their counterparts in each of the three higher poverty rate categories to use this proportion of their time on college preparation.

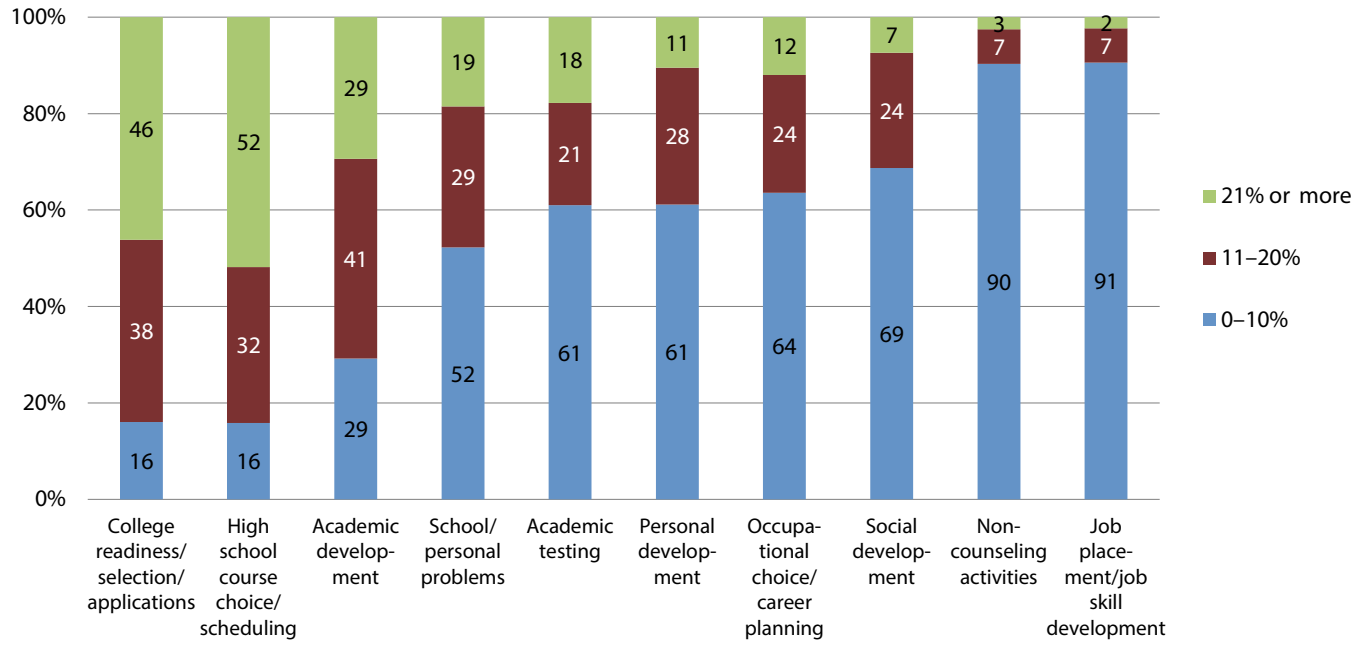
SCHOOLS' HELP WITH COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTS AND STUDENTS' USE OF THIS HELP

Counselors reported that their schools offered students several types of help with college admissions tests. As Figure 6 shows, all counselors reported providing access to information about when and where admissions tests were offered (100 percent), and almost all offered assistance with exam registration fees and fee

[8] The initial analyses conducted for this study examined whether the outcomes analyzed in Part I of this report differed by the priority that principals placed on preparing students for postsecondary schooling. This was the only outcome where a significant difference occurred by principals' priorities, and so it is only noted here. The higher principals prioritized preparing students for postsecondary schooling the more likely their school counselors were to report that counseling staff spent more than 20 percent of their time on college readiness, selection, and applications.

Figure 4

Percentage of Time Counselors Reported That Their Counseling Department Spent on Various Activities

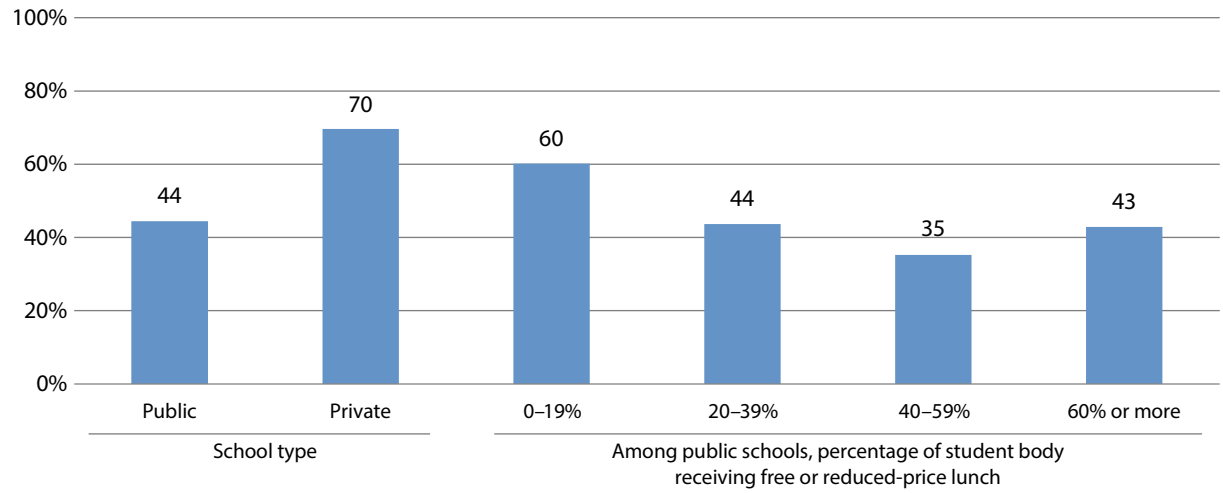


NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 5

Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their Counseling Department Spent More Than 20 Percent of Their Time on College Readiness, Selection, and Applications, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics

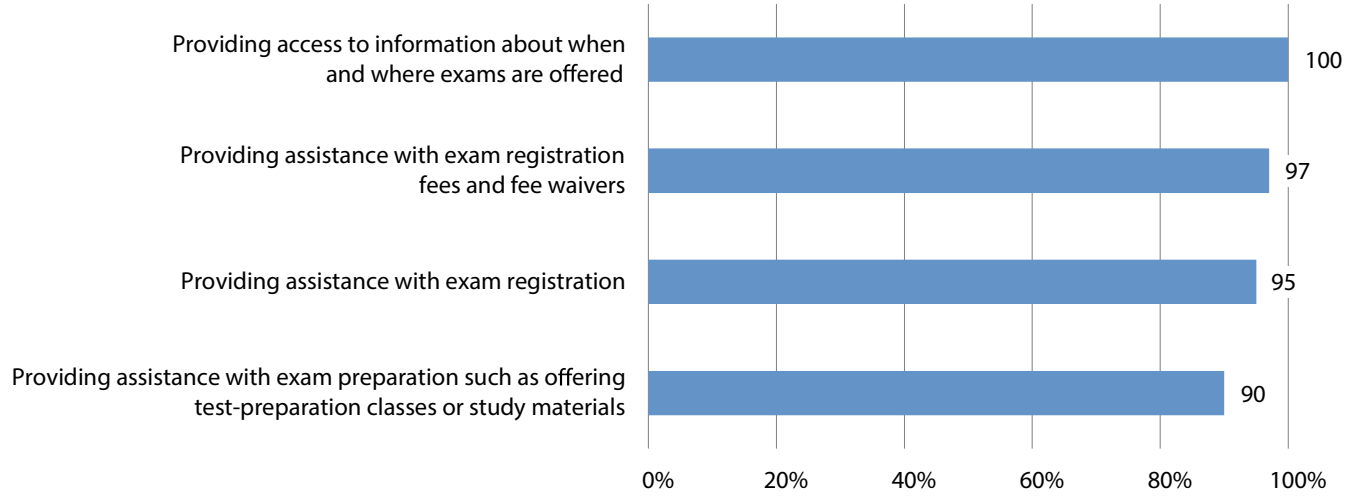


NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 6

Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered Various Types of Help with College Admissions Tests



NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

waivers (97 percent) and with exam registration more generally (95 percent). In addition, 90 percent of counselors reported that their school offered test-preparation classes or study materials.

For two of these types of help (assistance with exam registration fees and fee waivers and assistance with exam registration), significant differences occurred by school characteristics. Appendix Table 4 indicates that school size and affluence appear to influence school supports. Compared with public schools and small schools with fewer than 500 students, private schools and schools with 2,000 or more students were less likely to provide assistance with exam registration fees and fee waivers. As for providing assistance with exam registration more generally, schools in the largest size category (vs. the two smallest categories), urban schools (vs. rural and town schools), and schools with admissions test scores in the highest quintile (vs. the three lowest quintiles) were less likely to offer such help.[9]

While it is helpful for schools to offer various types of support, another key factor in their impact is whether students avail themselves of this help. *Among schools that provided a given type of help,* counselors estimated the percentage of juniors and seniors who used this type of help in the 2011–12 academic year. Focusing first on the total columns in Figure 7 produces two insights. First, students tended to take advantage of the information that schools provided about when and where exams were offered. Specifically, 36 percent of counselors indicated that a large proportion of students (measured as 75 percent or more students throughout this and the next two sections of the report) made use of this help. That said, students' use of other types of admissions test support was less common. Thirty-two percent of counselors reported that a small proportion of students (measured as 10 percent or fewer students in this and the next two sections of the report) used their schools' assistance with exam registration fees and fee waivers; 19 percent indicated so regarding exam registration more broadly; and 24 percent reported this low level of use for test-preparation classes or materials.

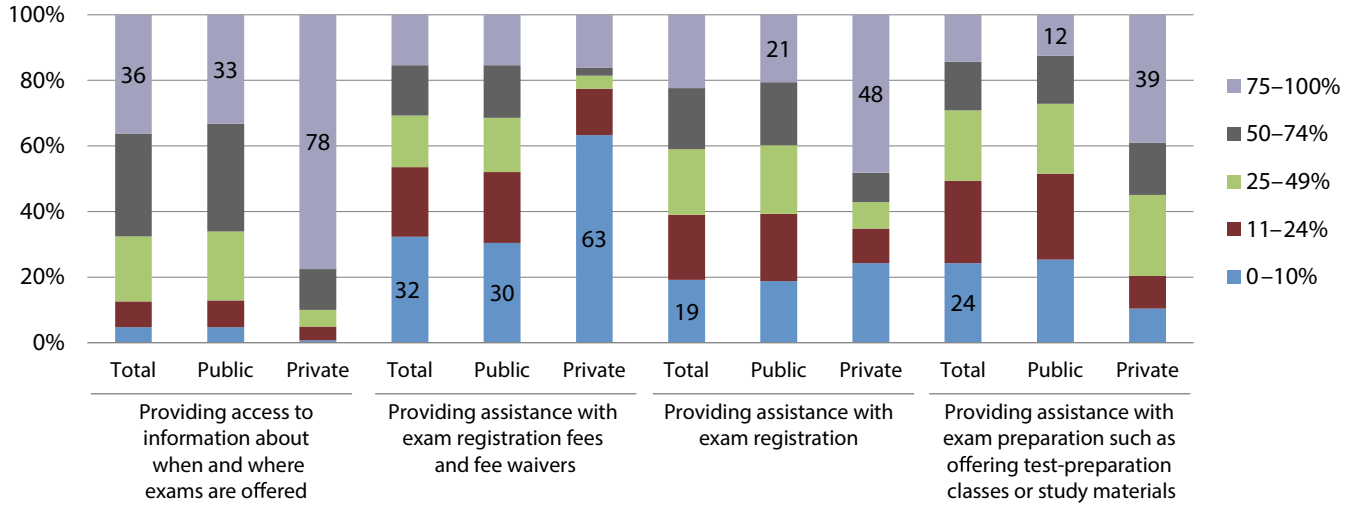
Students' use of the four types of school help with college admissions tests presented in the figure differed at public and private high schools. As the data show, it was much more common for counselors at private schools than at public schools to report that a high proportion of students took advantage of schools' assistance with when and where exams are offered (78 percent vs. 33 percent), exam registration (48 percent vs. 21 percent), and test-preparation classes or study materials (39 percent vs. 12 percent). In part, these results likely reflect private high schools' higher four-year college attendance rate.[10] That said, it was far less common for students at private schools than those at public schools to avail themselves of school help with exam registration fees and fee waivers. Specifically, 63 percent of counselors at private schools estimated that just a small proportion of their students took advantage of this support, while 30 percent of counselors at public schools reported doing so.

[9] Schools' college admissions test scores and the socioeconomic status of their students are highly related and may be influencing this and other results. For example, among all public schools scoring in the highest test score quintile, 53 percent had student bodies where less than 20 percent of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch and only 2 percent had student bodies where 60 percent or more students were eligible. Conversely, examining all public schools where 60 percent or more students received lunch, less than 5 percent of these schools scored in the highest or second highest test score quintiles combined.

[10] Analysis of base-year HSLS data using the nationally representative school weight indicated that the median four-year college attendance rate at private schools was 77 percent vs. 39 percent at public schools.

Figure 7

Among Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of Help with College Admissions Tests, Their Estimate of the Percentage of 11th and 12th Graders Who Used This Type of Help in 2011–12, by School Type



NOTES: Differences by school type are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Students' use of college admissions test help also differed by two other school characteristics. The first panel of Figure 8 shows that schools with college admissions test scores in the lowest quintile were more likely than schools in the two highest quintiles to report that a large proportion of students made use of help with exam registration fees and fee waivers. This is not surprising given the association between poverty levels in schools and test scores noted in footnote 9. Further supporting the relevance of schools' socioeconomic composition, the next two panels illustrate that the higher schools' poverty rate, the less likely they were to have only a small proportion of students taking advantage of help with exam registration fees and fee waivers and with exam registration in general.

SCHOOLS' HELP WITH COLLEGE INFORMATION AND STUDENTS' USE OF THIS HELP

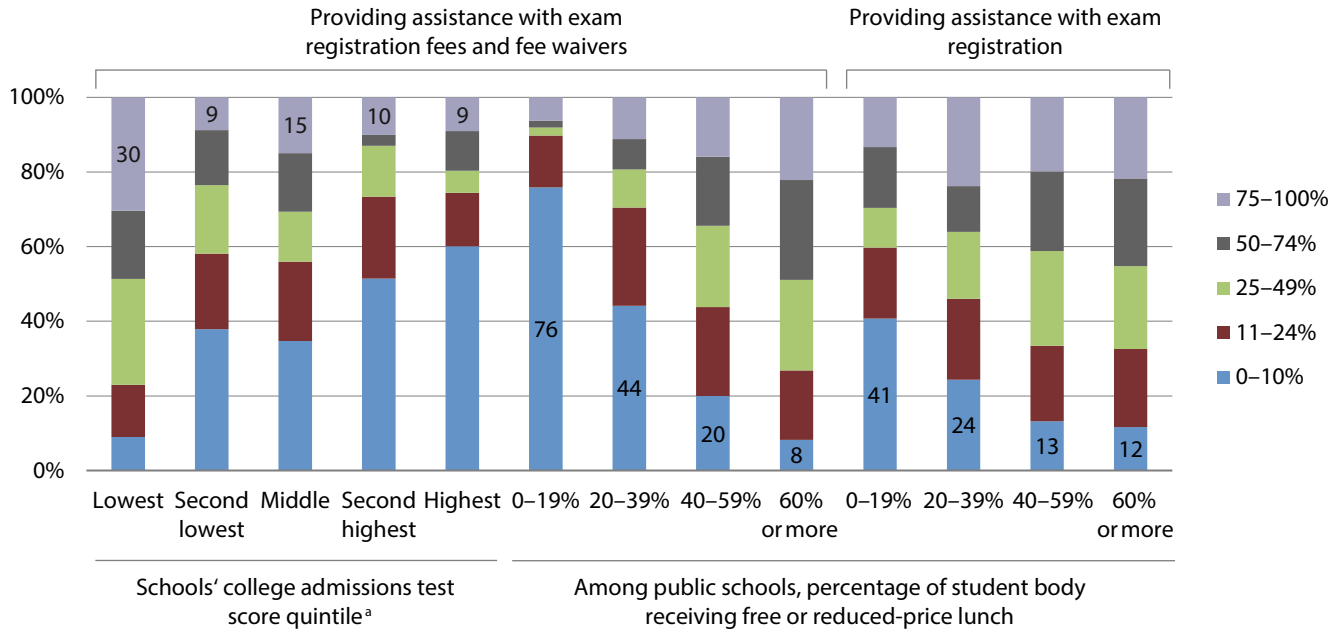
Schools can also aid students in their transition to life after high school by providing information about different types of colleges and assisting them with the college application process. As shown in Figure 9, nearly all schools helped students identify criteria in deciding where to apply (99 percent) and provided assistance completing college or university applications (98 percent). Vast majorities of schools also provided access to information about colleges or universities (96 percent), held information sessions for students and parents about college (94 percent), and held or participated in college fairs (92 percent). These percentages were similar across schools, with two exceptions. As shown in Appendix Table 5, schools in the smallest size category were significantly less likely to hold information sessions about colleges than schools in the three middle school-size categories. And, while results differed significantly overall by test score quintile, the apparent lower percentage of schools in the highest quintile offering help with completing applications was not significantly different from schools in each of the other four quintiles when *t*-tests were conducted separately.

Students' use of their schools' help with exploring college options is also important in assessing the ultimate value of these school supports. Again examining the responses of counselors at schools offering each type of help, between 25 and 30 percent reported that at least 75 percent of upperclassmen capitalized on each kind of college information help presented in Figure 10 except for holding information sessions about college. Only 16 percent of counselors reported such a high proportion of student use of that support.

The rates at which students took advantage of these school-provided sources of information about college differed by several school characteristics. First, for each type of college information presented in Figure 10, public school counselors were significantly less likely than

Figure 8

Among Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of Help with College Admissions Tests, Their Estimate of the Percentage of 11th and 12th Graders Using This Type of School Help in 2011–12, by Other Statistically Significant School Characteristics



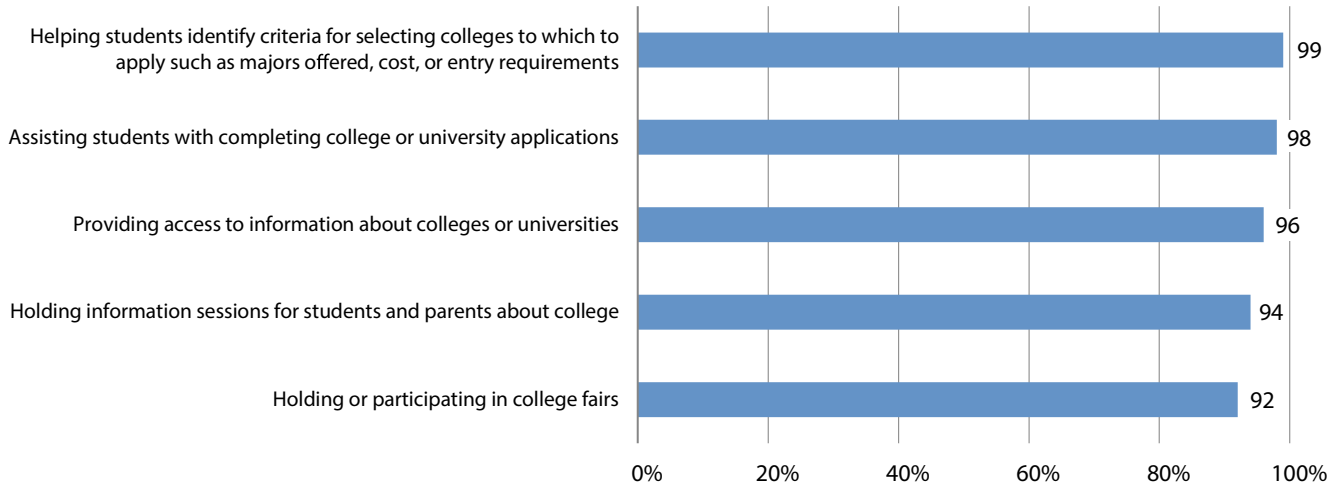
[a]See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 9

Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered Various Types of Help with College Information

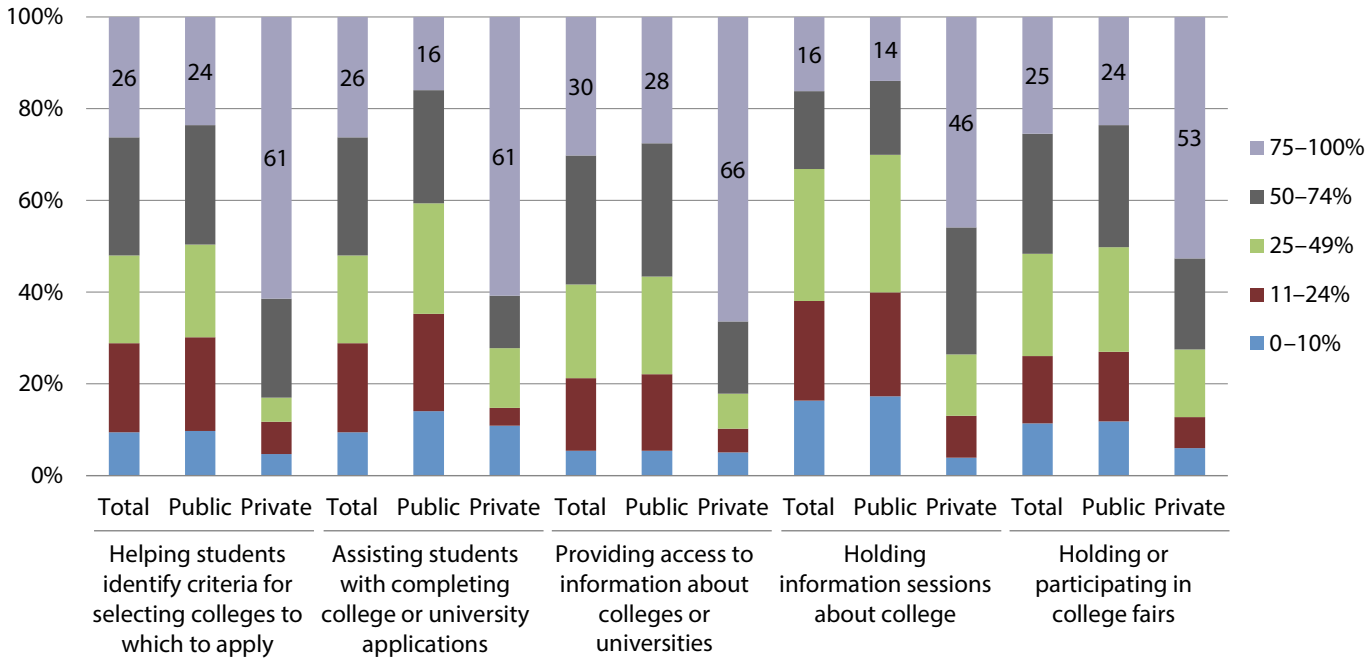


NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 10

Among Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of College Information Help, Their Estimate of the Percentage of 11th and 12th Graders Using This Type of School Help in 2011–12, by School Type



NOTES: Differences by school type are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

private school counselors to report high use. Figure 11 highlights the three other significant differences observed by school characteristics. Counselors from town schools were less likely than counselors from urban and suburban schools to report high student use of access to information about colleges or universities. Also, compared with counselors at schools in the first and third test score quintiles, counselors at schools in the two highest quartiles were more apt to report high student use of school information sessions about college—probably because a greater proportion of their students had the academic preparation to go on to college. Lastly, the larger their schools, the less likely counselors were to report high levels of student participation in college fairs.

SCHOOLS' HELP WITH THE FINANCIAL AID PROCESS AND STUDENTS' USE OF THIS HELP

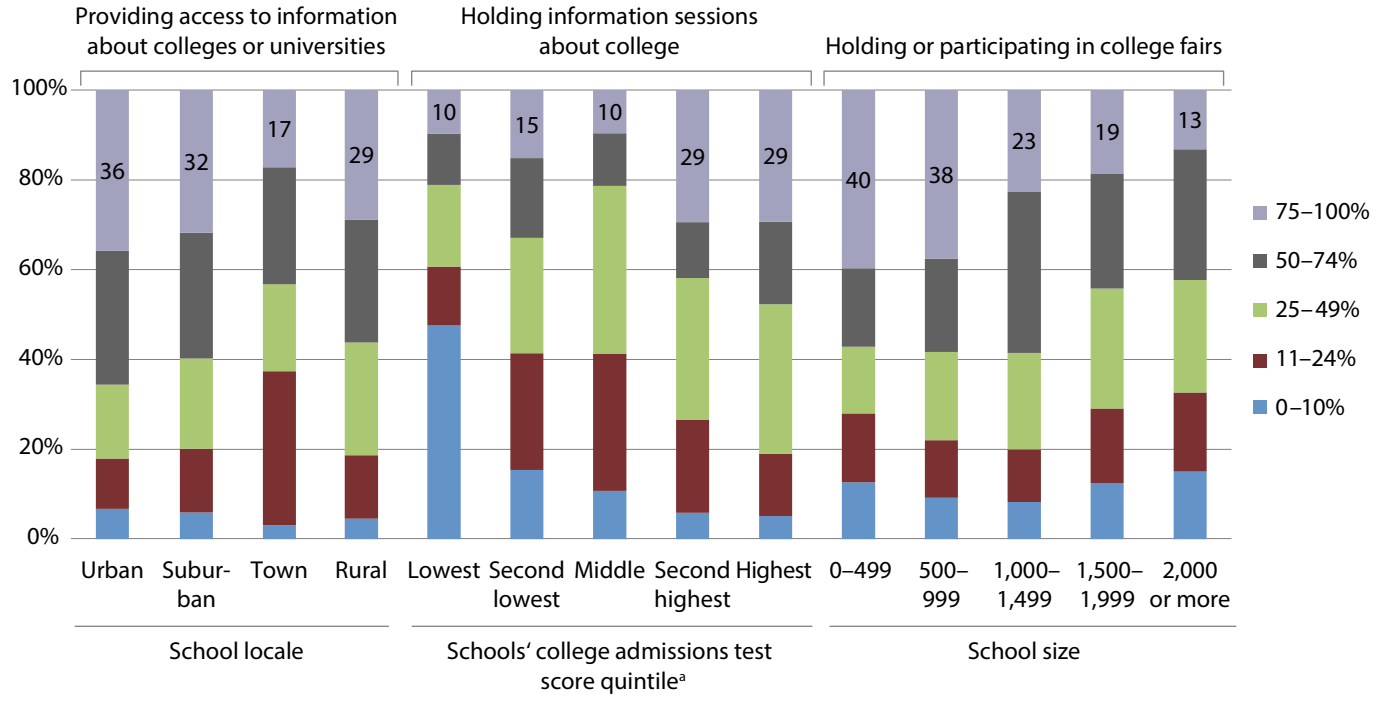
Counselors were also asked about the types of help their schools provided with the financial aid process. The vast majority of counselors reported that their school made information about aid available for students to explore on their own (96 percent) and offered informational meetings about the FAFSA process (95 percent) (Figure 12). A sizeable 88 percent of schools also held informational meetings on sources of financial aid more broadly, and 85 percent assisted with completing financial aid applications other than the FAFSA. Between four-fifths and three-quarters of schools supplied the remaining supports: individual counseling sessions to help students identify sources of financial aid (80 percent), computer access for completing the FAFSA (79 percent), assistance with completing the FAFSA (78 percent), and FAFSA deadline reminders (76 percent).

The percentage of schools offering many of these types of financial aid help differed by three school characteristics, and the results imply that these differences may be driven in part by the socioeconomic composition of their student bodies. To begin, private schools were significantly less likely than public schools to provide all of the types of help with the financial aid process presented in Figure 12 except for sending out reminders of FAFSA deadlines where no significant difference was found (Appendix Table 6). In addition, schools in the highest college admissions test score quintile were consistently less likely than those in the lowest quintile to provide four forms of financial aid help. Keeping with this trend, counselors at public schools in the lowest poverty rate category were less likely (than those in the second highest and/or highest poverty rate category depending on the outcome) to offer five kinds of financial aid help.

Students took advantage of some types of financial aid help more than others. Counselors were most likely to report high student use of the information that schools made available for students to explore

Figure 11

Among Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of College Information Help, Their Estimate of the Percentage of 11th and 12th Graders Using This Type of School Help in 2011–12, by Other Statistically Significant School Characteristics



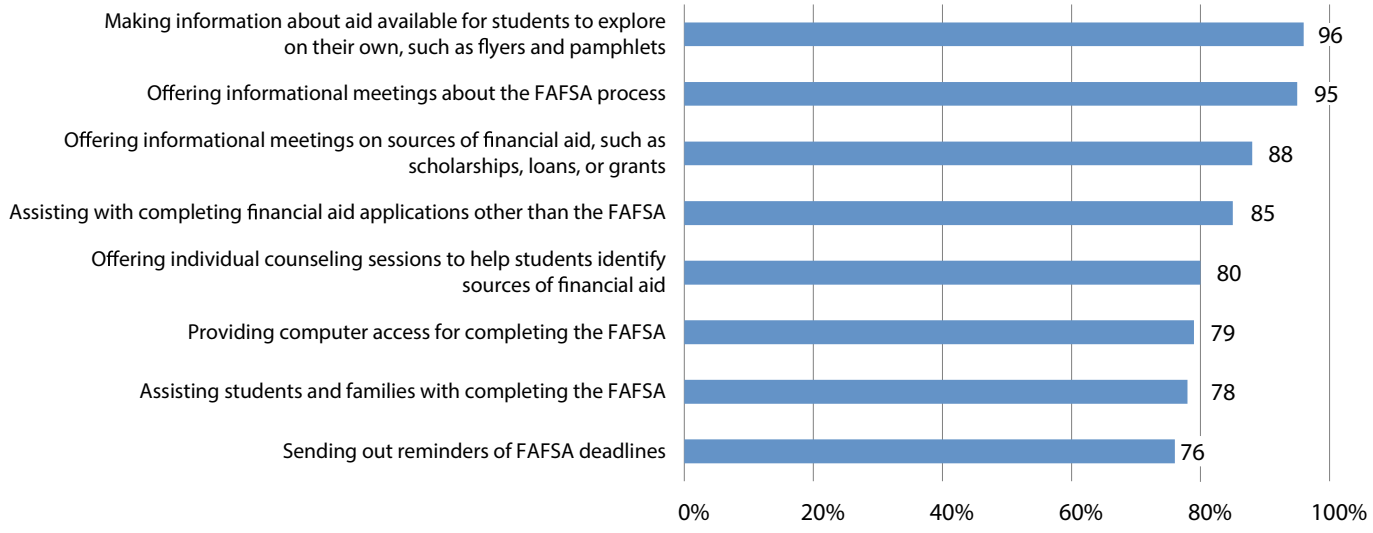
[a]See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 12

Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered Various Types of Help with the Financial Aid Process



NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

on their own (26 percent, Figure 13) and FAFSA deadline reminders (32 percent, Figure 14). Eleven percent or fewer counselors reported that similarly high proportions of students capitalized on the other types of financial aid help that their schools made available.

Students' use of three types of financial aid help differed by school type. Compared with public schools, private schools were less likely to have a low proportion of students taking advantage of informational meetings about the FAFSA process as well as more likely to have a high proportion of students availing themselves of informational meetings about sources of aid and FAFSA deadline reminders. In thinking about why private schools, which tend to have more affluent student bodies, have greater use of financial aid supports, it is important to keep two things in mind. First, these differences may reflect the fact that public high schools have a lower college-going rate. Second, it is also essential to remember that these distributions of student use include only schools offering this type of help. Thus, private schools where few students need these types of financial aid help, causing their schools to not offer them, have already been excluded from the distributions presented here.

Given the already noted correlation between schools' poverty and achievement levels, it is not surprising that the extent to which students took advantage of school-provided financial aid help varied by these school characteristics as well. Figure 15 shows that public schools in the highest poverty category were more likely than those in the lower categories to have at least 25 percent of students making use of their schools' access to computers for completing the FAFSA and their schools' help with FAFSA completion. In addition, schools in the lowest college admissions test score quintile were more likely than schools in higher quintiles to have 25 percent or more students taking advantage of school assistance with FAFSA completion.

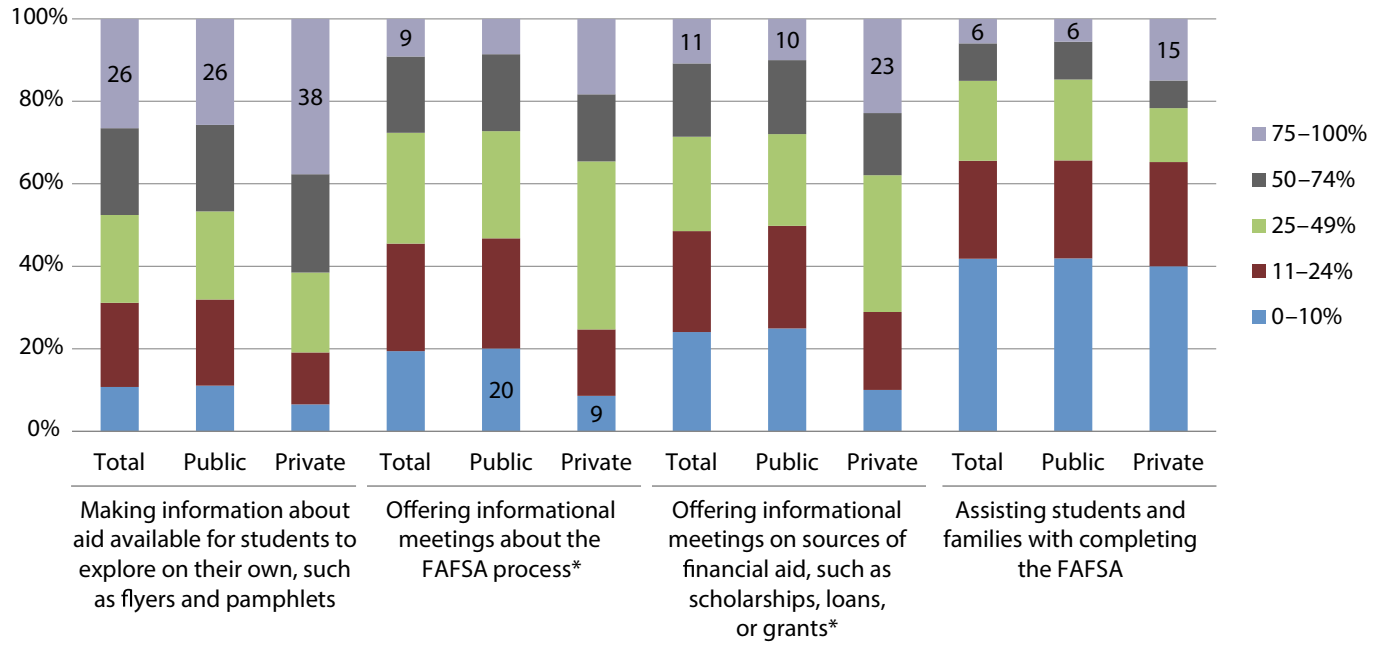
FOLLOWING STUDENT OUTCOMES BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

Whether schools follow up with their students after they leave high school may also shed light on schools' interest in and emphasis on students' postsecondary success. About 58 percent of counselors reported that their schools tracked what their students did after high school in some way (Figure 16). Despite increased attention and federal funding to help build and develop state longitudinal databases, it was still much more common for schools to use a student or alumni survey (49 percent) than a state or national database[11] (22 percent) to do so. Thirty-seven percent of schools collected information specifically on whether their former students who enrolled in college had persisted beyond their first year.

The percentage of schools tracking former students differed by school characteristics. Patterns appear to be shaped by schools' resources and/or the extent to which their connection with students

Figure 13

Among Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of Help with the Financial Aid Process, Their Estimate of the Percentage Distribution of 11th and 12th Graders Using This Help in 2011–12, by School Type



* Differences by school type that are statistically significant at the .05 level or below.

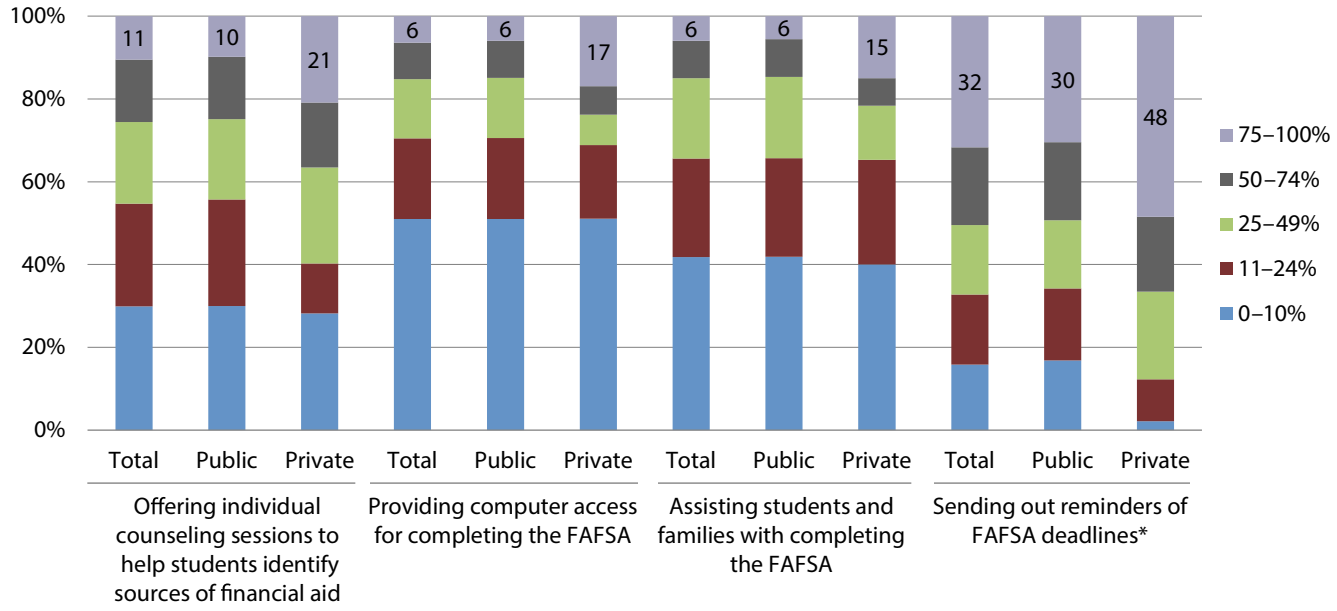
NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

[11] The National Student Clearinghouse was provided as an example of a national database.

Figure 14

Among Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of Help with the Financial Aid Process, Their Estimate of the Percentage Distribution of 11th and 12th Graders Using This Help in 2011–12, by School Type (Continued)



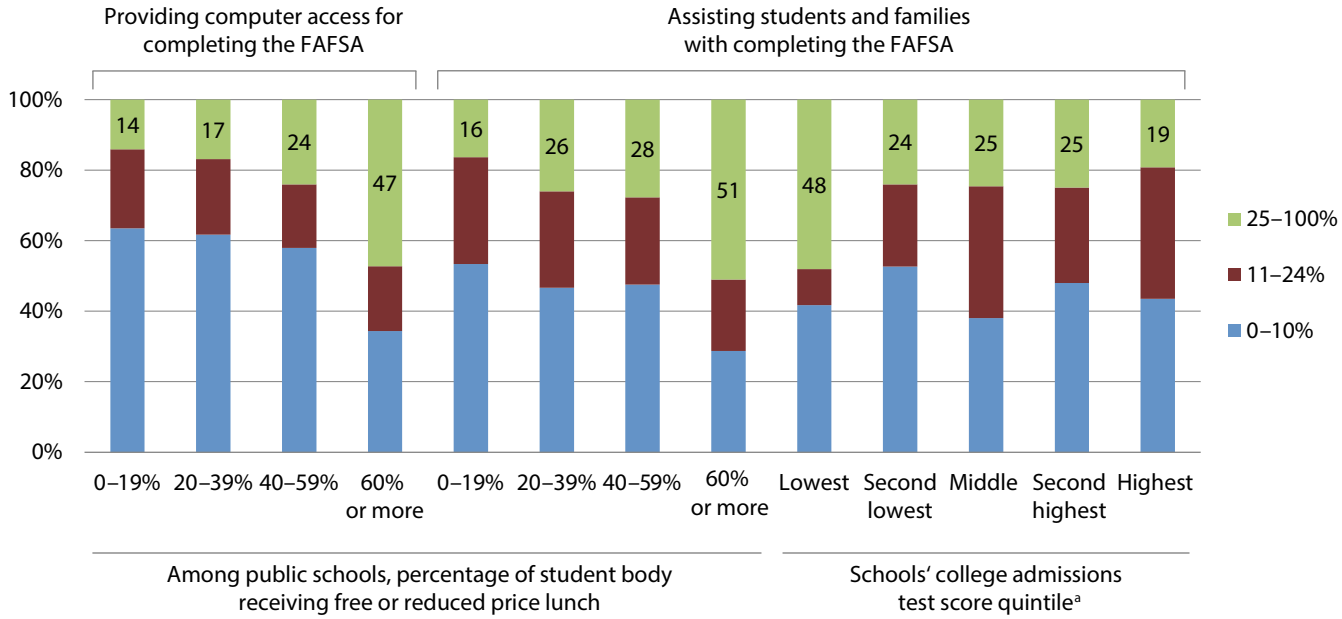
*Differences by school type that are statistically significant at the .05 level or below.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 15

Among Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of Help with the Financial Aid Process, Their Estimate of the Percentage Distribution of 11th and 12th Graders Using This Help in 2011–12, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics



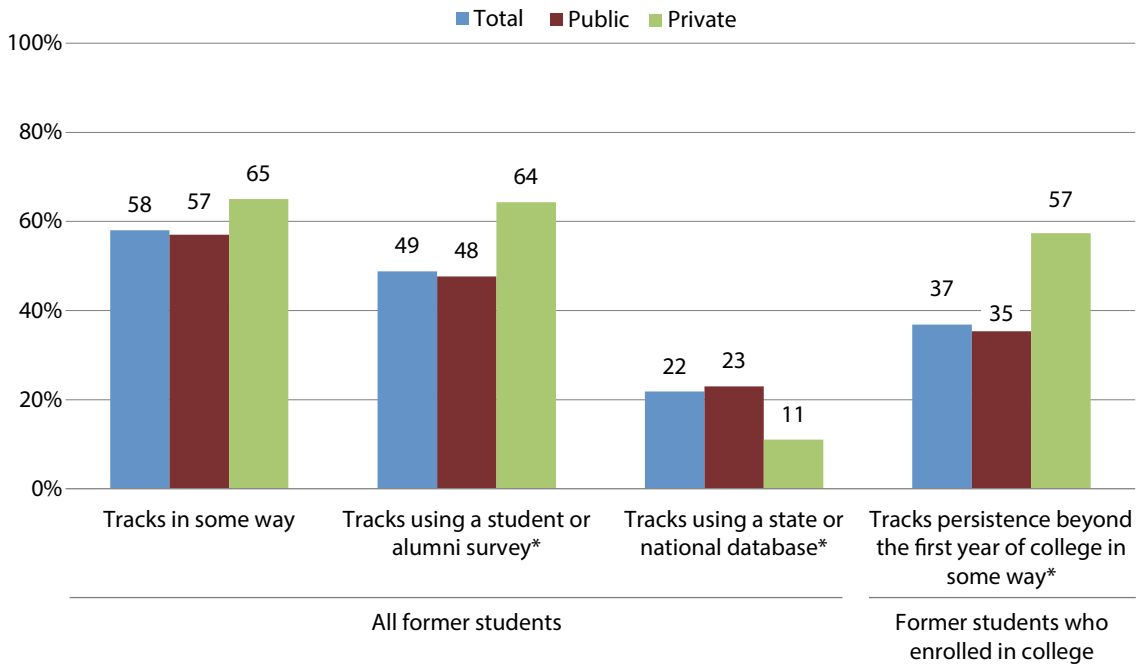
[a]See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. For sample size reasons and to better highlight patterns, the top three categories shown in the previous two categories (25–49%, 50–75%, and 75–100%) have been aggregated. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 16

Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Tracked Former Students in Various Ways, by School Type



*Differences by school type that are statistically significant at the .05 level or below.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

and families enable them to secure survey responses. Compared with public schools, private schools were more likely to use a student or alumni survey and were less likely to tap into a state or national database. Private schools were also 22 percentage points more likely than public schools to track their students' persistence in college. This may occur because a lower proportion of public school students enroll in college,[12] but private schools may also find it important to track student outcomes in order to ensure that future families see value in paying to enroll. Among public schools, the lower schools' poverty rate was, the more likely schools were to track all students through a student or alumni survey (Appendix Table 7). In addition, rural schools were significantly more likely than urban and suburban schools to track their students' postsecondary persistence beyond the first year.

STUDENTS' AND PARENTS' INTERACTIONS WITH SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND HIRED COLLEGE COUNSELORS

While counselors can communicate with students and parents en masse through written materials or information sessions, individual conversations with students and parents can also be important in students' transition to college.[13] Almost two-thirds of all students (63 percent) reported that by Spring 2012 they had talked with their school counselor about their options after high school (Figure 17). Students attending private (vs. public) schools, suburban (vs. urban, town, and rural) schools, and schools in the two lower poverty rate categories (vs. the higher two categories) were significantly more likely to have spoken to a counselor. While 63 percent of *students* had spoken to their high school counselor about their options, 51 percent of *students' parents* had done so (Figure 18). As with students, the percentage of parents who had such conversations was significantly higher at private schools than at public schools. Parents' likelihood of speaking with a counselor was also significantly lower at schools with more than 2,000 students than at schools in general.

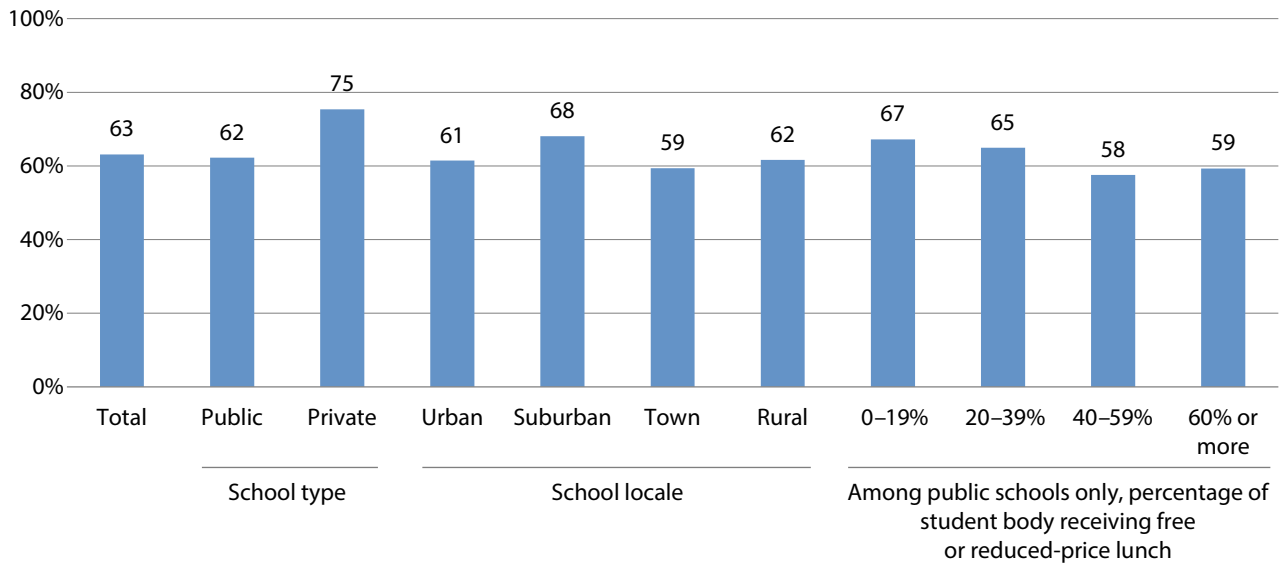
Families also can hire private counselors to help with college admission, but doing so was relatively rare: 13 percent of students (Figure 19) and 15 percent of parents (Figure 20) reported ever speaking with a hired counselor. Among both students and parents, the percentage speaking with hired counselors was significantly lower for families at public schools than for those at private schools. Differences by schools' college admissions test quintile were also significant for both students and parents, taking on a u-shaped pattern. Lastly, students who attended urban and suburban schools rather than town and rural schools were more likely to have spoken with a hired counselor (Figure 19).

[12] See footnote 10.

[13] See the authors' prior NACAC report and Part II of this report for more information on the positive relationship between communications and promising actions and plans in the path to college.

Figure 17

Percentage of Students Reporting That They Have Talked with Their High School Counselor about Options for Life after High School, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics

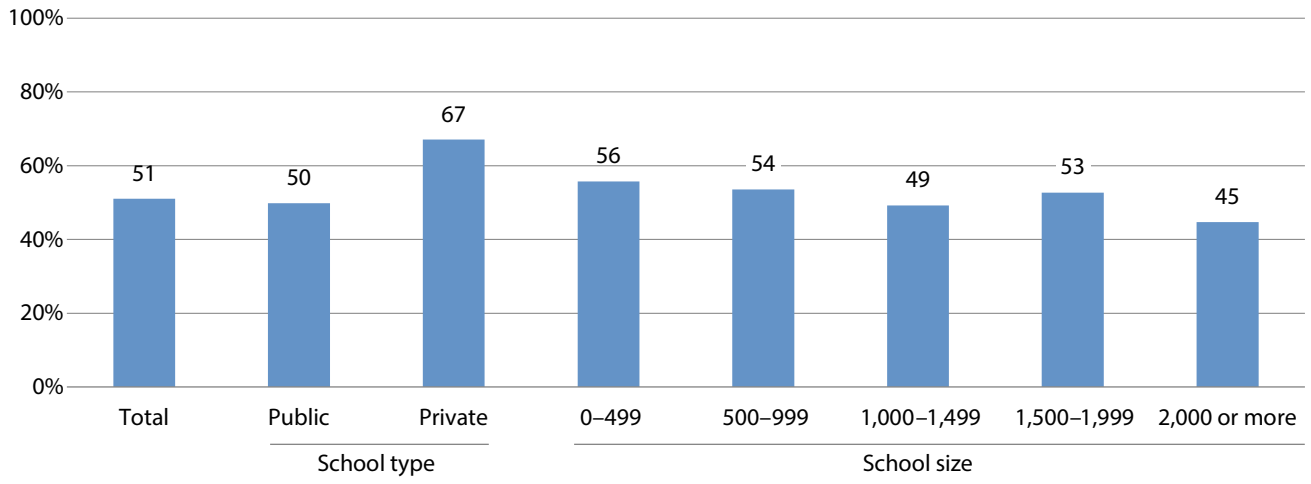


NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 18

Percentage of Parent Respondents Reporting That They Have Talked with High School Counselor about Child's Options for Life after High School, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics

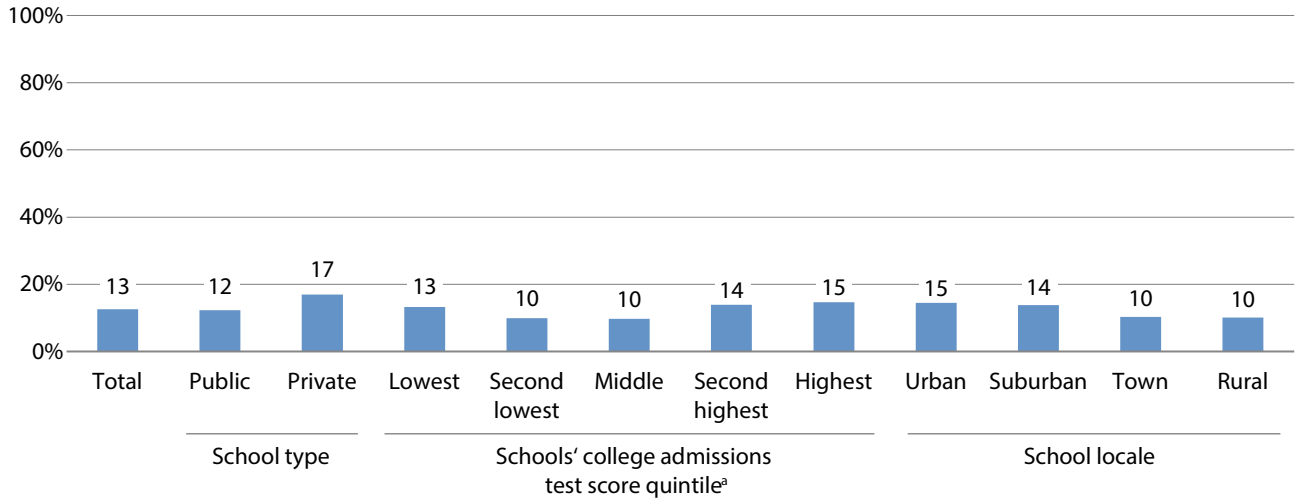


NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2PARENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 19

Percentage of Students Reporting That They Have Talked with a Hired Counselor to Prepare for College Admission, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics



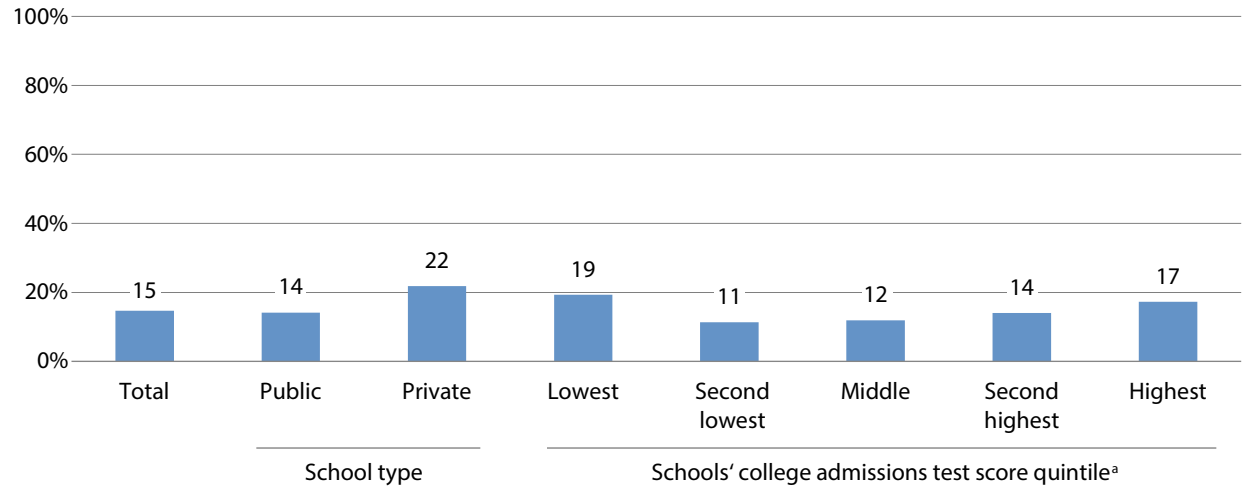
[a]See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Figure 20

Percentage of Parent Respondents Reporting That They Have Talked with a Hired Counselor to Help Child Prepare for College Admission, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics



[a]See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2PARENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

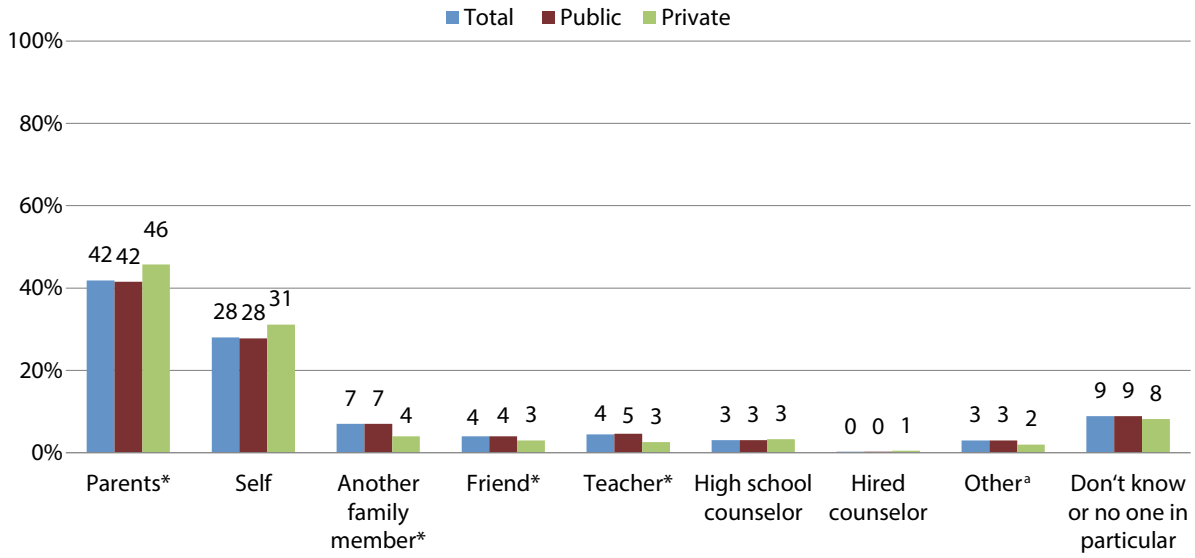
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF COUNSELORS' INFLUENCE

Having discussed what school counselors provide and the interactions that students and parents have with both them and hired counselors, it is worth examining the overall influence students perceive counselors to have on their postsecondary education plans. When asked who most influenced their thinking about education after high school, about two-fifths of students (42 percent) chose their parents and 28 percent picked themselves (Figure 21). Although the next most commonly chosen influencers—another family member, friend, and teacher—were selected by between just 7 and 4 percent of students, each of these sources came in ahead of high school counselor, whom 3 percent of students chose. Practically no students (less than 1 percent) selected a hired counselor as most influential. In considering the low percentages of students who picked school and hired counselors, it is important to keep in mind that counselors may be more influential in providing information about the steps required to realize students' educational vision than in shaping students' vision itself.

Focusing on the substantive categories and excluding the small mixed "other" category, a few differences occurred by school characteristics, particularly those shaped by social class. Compared with public school students, private school students were more likely to select parents and were less likely to pick another family member, friend, and teacher. In addition, students at urban and suburban schools were more likely than those at town and rural schools to select a hired counselor (Appendix Table 8). Students who attended schools in the highest or second highest test score quintile were less likely than those in each of the lower three quintiles to pick a family member as most influential. Finally, examining public school students, those attending schools in the two lower poverty rate categories rather than schools in the two higher poverty rate categories were less likely to select a family member and more likely to choose themselves as most influential.

Figure 21

Percentage Distribution of Students' Selection of the Individual That Was Most Influential in Their Thinking about Education after High School, by School Type



*Differences by school type that are statistically significant at the .05 level or below.

[a]Other includes the options: Coach or scout, Military recruiter, and Employer.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Part II What Can Schools' Counseling Offices Do To Facilitate Students' Actions, Plans, and Beliefs Surrounding College Enrollment?

Having examined what schools were doing in 2012 to help students make a successful transition to college, this part of the report examines which counseling characteristics and other factors are related to high school juniors' actions, plans, and beliefs that should facilitate their college enrollment in the fall after finishing high school. Using both descriptive statistics and regression analysis, six outcomes will be discussed. They include whether students 1) had searched the Internet for college options or read college guides; 2) had attended a program at, or taken a tour of, a college campus; 3) planned to enroll in a bachelor's degree program in Fall 2013; 4) disagreed with the idea that their family could not afford to send them to college; 5) believed that they would qualify for need-based financial aid; and 6) planned to file a FAFSA.

The research literature suggests that there are many factors that influence whether students take these steps, make these plans, or hold these beliefs. For this report, these factors have been organized into three sets, identified in Table 1. The first set, counseling characteristics, consists of such variables as schools' counselors caseload, the percentage of hours that counseling staff spent on college activities, whether schools had a counselor whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection, whether the student reported having spoken to a counselor about options after high school, and whether a parent reported having spoken to a counselor about the child's options after high school.[14] Additional characteristics focused on particular counselor actions are also included in this set of counseling characteristics when the research literature suggests they are highly relevant to the specific outcome examined.

The variables in the next set of factors are slightly more removed from counselors' direct purview: student's perceptions of college affordability, participation in a program that provides college preparation, proportion of close friends who planned to attend a four-year college, and parents' educational expectations for their child following the fall after high school graduation. While these variables can be shaped by many factors outside of counselors' control, counselors still may be able to influence them. For example, the authors' prior report showed that the time counselors spent on college activities had a significant positive effect on shaping the college affordability perceptions of ninth graders who would be first-generation college students. Counselors may also be able to encourage and facilitate school and student participation in college preparation camps and programs like Upward Bound, Talent Search, Gear Up, AVID, and/or MESA that provide college preparation. Because some of students' close friends are likely to be school classmates, if counselors can foster a college-going culture at their schools or help connect students with academically matched peers, counselors may be able to influence students through their friendships.[15] Likewise, by providing information to and/or meeting with parents about their child's academic and financial aid eligibility for postsecondary education, counselors may be able to influence parents' educational expectations and plans for their child.[16]

Finally, in order to better identify which counseling characteristics and characteristics that counselors may be able to influence are related to the outcomes of interest, it is important to control for other variables that research consistently finds to be related to students' paths to college. By incorporating these variables into the regressions, the independent effects of school practices and counselor activities can be better assessed. Most of these control variables are demographic, but students' postsecondary plans as of ninth grade,[17] students' Spring 2012 math score, and school type were added here as well. In this way, analyses control for students' preexisting plans for college, the fact that students with higher test scores tend to be more oriented toward postsecondary education, and the research that shows that students who attend private schools rather than public schools tend to receive different support as they make their transition to college.[18]

Students' College Search, Visits, and Enrollment Plans

STUDENTS' SEARCHING FOR COLLEGE OPTIONS VIA THE INTERNET OR COLLEGE GUIDES

By Spring 2012, over four-fifths (82 percent) of students had searched the Internet for college options or read college guides (Table 1). Focusing on counselor characteristics first reveals that this percentage differed by whether students had talked with a counselor. In the next set of variables capturing factors that counselors may be able to influence, significant differences occurred across all four measures. Significant differences were found across all of the controls presented in the table as well.

The logistic regression presented in the first panel of Table 2 indicates which of these factors have an effect on students' behavior independent of the relationships among them. It shows that student reports of having talked to counselors remains highly significant.[19] Students who reported doing so had 93 percent greater odds of having started searching than their otherwise equivalent counterparts.

[14] While information on who prompted communications between students and counselors and between parents and counselors is not available, it is important to note that the survey questions for these items are not college specific; they ask about ever discussing the student's "options for life after high school." Thus, there is reason to believe that students and parents with a range of post-high school expectations—and not just those who were already college oriented—might have spoken to the counselor. Furthermore, regressions control for students' postsecondary aspirations as of ninth grade and parents' current postsecondary aspirations for their student. This suggests that when these counselor communications variables are significant, they are not merely capturing individuals already predisposed toward postsecondary education who initiated conversations with counselors for this reason.

[15] In results not shown, students' proportion of close friends with four-year college plans in 2012 was significantly and positively correlated with the four-year attendance rate of the schools they had attended in 2009. Information about the four-year attendance rate of students' 2012 schools was not available and is therefore not included in the analysis, but even if correlated, the four-year attendance rate is still a factor that counselors may be able to influence.

[16] In fact, among parents who in Fall 2009 expected that their child would one day receive a bachelor's degree, those who had spoken to a counselor by Spring 2012 were more likely than other parents to assert that they believed their child would be enrolled in a four-year institution in the fall after finishing high school.

[17] This is the only variable included from the base year. All of the other variables in this report come from the first follow-up.

[18] Part I of this report showed that of all the school characteristics examined, differences in counselor characteristics most frequently occurred by school type. For more information on how the college choice process differs at public schools and private schools, see McDonough, P. (1997). *Choosing Colleges: How Social Class and Schools Structure Opportunity.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

[19] As in the descriptive results, in the regression results, only predictors that are statistically significant at the .05 level are discussed in the text.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics: Students' College Search, College Visits, and Enrollment Plans as of Spring 2012

		Student had searched the Internet for college options or read college guides	Student had attended a program at, or taken a tour of, a college campus	Student planned to enroll in a bachelor's degree program in the fall of 2013
		Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
	Total	**82**	**52**	**40**
Counseling characteristics	School's counselor caseload			
	250 or fewer	87	54	43
	251–350	83	52	45
	351–450	83	52	41
	More than 450	82	52	35
	Percentage of hours counseling staff spent on college readiness, selection, and applications[3]			
	10% or less	86	51	42
	11% to 20%	82	51	36
	21% or more	84	55	44
	School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection[2]			
	No	84	50	39
	Yes	84	57	44
	School held information sessions for students and parents about college[2]			
	No	82	43	36
	Yes	84	53	41
	School offered students help identifying criteria for selecting colleges to which to apply, such as majors offered, cost, or entry requirements			
	No	76	44	
	Yes	84	53	
	School held or participated in college fairs			
	No	80	50	
	Yes	84	53	
	School offered informational meetings on sources of financial aid, such as scholarships, loans, or grants			
	No			45
	Yes			41
	Student reported having talked with a high school counselor about options for life after high school[1, 2, 3]			
	No	75	43	35
	Yes	87	58	42
	Parent respondent reported having talked with a high school counselor about child's options for life after high school[2]			
	No	81	49	39
	Yes	83	56	41
Characteristics that counselors may be able to influence	Student's perception of college affordability measured as response to the statement, "Even if you get accepted to college, your family cannot afford to send you."[1, 2, 3]			
	Strongly agree	78	41	27
	Agree	74	45	28
	Disagree	84	55	41
	Strongly disagree	89	59	53
	Student has participated in a program[a] that provides college preparation[1, 2, 3]			
	No	81	47	38
	Yes	88	72	48
	Proportion of student's close friends who planned to attend a four-year college[1, 2, 3]			
	Half or fewer	74	46	26
	More than half	91	59	53
	Parent's expectation for the level of school child will attend in Fall 2013[1, 2, 3]			
	High school	68	37	25
	Two-year college or occupational school	73	41	18
	Four-year college	92	62	58
	Don't know	67	44	18
Controls	In ninth grade student planned to enroll in an associate's or bachelor's degree program in the year after high school[1, 2, 3]			
	No	73	43	23
	Yes	88	57	49
	Student's Spring 2012 mathematics quintile[1, 2, 3]			
	Lowest	67	48	25
	Second lowest	75	44	24
	Middle	83	46	30
	Second highest	89	56	47
	Highest	90	64	63
	Parents' highest degree attained[1, 2, 3]			
	High school diploma or lower	77	45	27
	Associate's degree or certificate	81	50	33
	Bachelor's degree or higher	88	61	55
	Race/ethnicity[1, 3]			
	White	84	52	44
	Black	86	52	37
	Hispanic	74	50	29
	Asian	92	60	56
	Other race[b]	85	55	39
	Sex[1, 2, 3]			
	Male	75	49	36
	Female	90	55	43
	School type[1, 2, 3]			
	Public	82	52	39
	Private	89	66	56

[a] Includes college preparation camp, Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP, AVID, and/or MESA.

[b] "Other race" includes non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and students of more than one race.

[1] Differences in students' plans to enroll in a bachelor's degree program in the fall of 2013 are statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level for this predictor.

[2] Differences in students' attending a program at, or taking a tour of, a college campus are statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level for this predictor.

[3] Differences in students' searching the internet for college options or reading college guides are statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level for this predictor.

NOTES: As noted in the text, a set of common counselor characteristics is included for all three outcomes presented in this table. For the first two outcomes focused on students' exploration of college options, two additional counselor characteristics highly related to exploration of college options were included. For the third outcome focused on enrollment plans, a separate counselor characteristic about providing information on paying for college is included due to the influence college cost and financial aid information have been shown to have on students' decision to enroll. These additional counselor characteristics are grayed out when they are not included for the outcome of focus. Estimates are weighted by W2W1PAR.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Table 2: Logistic Regression Results: Students' College Search, College Visits, and Enrollment Plans as of Spring 2012

		Student had searched the Internet for college options or read college guides		Student had attended a program at, or taken a tour of, a college campus		Student planned to enroll in a bachelor's degree program in the fall of 2013	
	VARIABLE	Odds ratio	Pr > ChiSq	Odds ratio	Pr > ChiSq	Odds ratio	Pr > ChiSq
	Intercept	0.124	0.012 *	0.054	0.0012 **	0.036	<.0001 ***
Counseling characteristics	School's counselor caseload	1.000	0.8759	1	0.4536	0.999	0.1964
	Percentage of hours counseling staff spent on college readiness, selection, and applications						
	(10% or less)	—	—	—	—	—	—
	11% to 20%	0.657	0.0572 †	0.919	0.5398	0.725	0.0841 †
	21% or more	0.654	0.0615 †	0.937	0.6812	0.797	0.2061
	School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection	0.945	0.6974	1.177	0.1942	1.151	0.2799
	School held information sessions for students and parents about college	1.074	0.7962	1.629	0.0845 †	1.349	0.1414
	School offered students help in identifying criteria for selecting colleges to which to apply such as majors offered, cost, or entry requirements	1.414	0.566	0.925	0.8968		
	School held or participated in college fairs	1.367	0.1438	1.134	0.5391		
	School offered informational meetings on sources of financial aid, such as scholarships, loans, or grants					0.86	0.5378
	Student reports having talked with a high school counselor about options for life after high school	1.934	0.0001 ***	1.758	<.0001 ***	1.412	0.0081 **
	Parent respondent reports having talked with a high school counselor about child's options for life after high school	0.944	0.6988	1.069	0.573	0.836	0.1112
Characteristics that counselors may be able to influence	Student's perception of college affordability measured as level of disagreement with the statement, "Even if you get accepted to college, your family cannot afford to send you."	1.154	0.1093	1.091	0.2397	1.025	0.7583
	Student has participated in a program[a] that provides college preparation	1.300	0.2036	2.892	<.0001 ***	1.366	0.0869
	A majority of student's close friends planned to attend a four-year college	1.927	0.0092 **	1.107	0.4448	1.598	0.0006 ***
	Parent's expectation for the level of school child will attend in Fall 2013						
	(High school)	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Two-year college or occupational school	0.996	0.9887	1.072	0.8137	0.484	0.0173 *
	Four-year college	2.369	0.007 **	1.987	0.0148 *	1.58	0.1512
	Don't know	0.878	0.7068	1.468	0.2774	0.599	0.1166
Controls	In ninth grade student planned to enroll in an associate's or bachelor's degree program in the year after high school	1.212	0.2073	1.248	0.083 †	2.024	<.0001 ***
	Student's Spring 2012 mathematics score	1.035	0.0002 ***	1.013	0.0654 †	1.038	<.0001 ***
	Parents' highest degree attained						
	(High school diploma or lower)	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Associate's degree or certificate	0.879	0.5749	1.284	0.1196	1.265	0.2007
	Bachelor's degree or higher	0.756	0.1182	1.419	0.0316 *	1.598	0.0045 *
	Race/ethnicity						
	(White)	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Black	1.330	0.3854	0.895	0.6788	0.909	0.7421
	Hispanic	0.721	0.0694 †	1.016	0.9348	0.774	0.2783
	Asian	2.481	0.1597	0.854	0.5594	0.813	0.3921
	Other race[b]	1.497	0.1039	1.086	0.631	0.98	0.9283
	Sex						
	(Male)	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Female	2.684	<.0001 ***	1.139	0.2318	1.126	0.308
	School type						
	(Public)	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Private	1.064	0.8287	1.193	0.3392	0.744	0.0506 †

— Reference category, no estimate calculated.

† p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

[a] Includes college preparation camp, Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP, AVID, and/or MESA.

[b] "Other race" includes non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and students of more than one race.

NOTES: As noted in the text, a set of common counselor characteristics is included for all three outcomes presented in this table. For the first two outcomes focused on students' exploration of college options, two additional counselor characteristics highly related to exploration of college options were included. For the third outcome focused on enrollment plans, a separate counselor characteristic about providing information on paying for college is included due to the influence college cost and financial aid information have been shown to have on students' decision to enroll. These additional counselor characteristics are grayed out when they are not included for the outcome of focus. Estimates are weighted by W2W1PAR.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

A couple of the factors that counselors may be able to influence were significant as well. Students who counted more than half of their close friends as planning to attend a four-year college and students who had parents who expected them to attend a four-year college in Fall 2013 had significantly greater odds of having searched for information on the Internet or read college guides. Students with higher 11th-grade math scores and who were female were also more likely to have searched, all things equal.

STUDENTS' ATTENDING A PROGRAM OR TAKING A TOUR OF A COLLEGE CAMPUS

Searching for college options via the Internet or guidebooks is one step, but visiting a college campus for a program or tour requires an additional level of effort. Table 1 shows that by Spring 2012, just over half of students (52 percent) had attended a program at a college campus or taken a campus tour. This percentage differed significantly by a couple of school counseling characteristics. Students were more likely to have attended a program at or toured a college campus if they had attended schools that had a counselor whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or selection or attended schools that held an information session for students and parents about college. Students and parents who reported having spoken to a counselor about post-high school options were also more likely to have taken this step. Differences by all four variables in the next set of characteristics that counselors may be able to influence were significant as well. Significant differences by all controls except race/ethnicity also occurred.

After controlling for the influence of other variables through regression analysis, several of these patterns hold. To begin, student reports of having talked to a counselor were associated with 76 percent greater odds of visiting a campus for a program or tour (Panel 2, Table 2). Two measures that counselors may be able to influence remained significant as well. Odds of taking the additional step of visiting a college campus were 189 percent greater for students who participated in a program that includes college preparation and 98 percent greater for students whose parents expected they would attend a four-year college in Fall 2013. As for controls, having parents with a bachelor's degree or higher also had a positive significant relationship on taking this action.

STUDENTS' PLANNING TO ENROLL IN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN FALL 2013

The next analysis examines factors significantly related to students' planning to enroll in a bachelor's degree program in Fall 2013—the semester after students who were juniors in 2012 would typically graduate from high school. Having such plans by the spring of junior year is helpful because students who want to enroll in a bachelor's degree program at a public four-year or a private nonprofit four-year institution usually have college admissions tests they need to take and face earlier admissions deadlines than students seeking subbaccalaureate credentials.

Almost two-fifths of students (40 percent) reported that they planned to enter a bachelor's degree program in the fall after completing high school (Table 1). Examining counseling characteristics first, the percentage of time that counselors spent on college readiness, selection, and applications and whether the student had spoken to a counselor were both statistically significant. Each characteristic that counselors may be able to influence was also significant. Specifically, students who disagreed that their family could not afford to send them to college, participated in a program with a college preparatory component, had a higher proportion of close friends with four-year college plans, or had parents who expected them to attend a four-year college[20] were more likely to report having bachelor's degree plans. Finally, differences occurred by all control variables as well.

The last panel in Table 2 highlights the factors that remained significant after controlling for other variables—including the postsecondary plans that students held two years earlier while in ninth grade. Students who had spoken to a counselor had 41 percent greater odds of having bachelor's degree plans in Spring 2012 than did students who had not spoken with a counselor. Two additional variables that counselors may be able to influence were significant as well. Having more than half of their close friends who planned to attend a four-year college was associated with students' having significantly higher odds of having bachelor's degree plans. Students whose parents expected them to enroll in a two-year college or occupational school in Fall 2013, however, had 52 percent lower odds of having bachelor's degree plans. Three control variables were significant as well. Not unexpectedly, ninth-grade students who planned to enroll in some postsecondary education had greater odds than those who did not plan to enroll of having bachelor's degree plans two-and-a-half years later. Students who had higher math test scores and who had parents with bachelor's degrees also had significantly greater odds of planning to enroll in a bachelor's degree program after high school.

[20] Interestingly, there was nowhere near perfect congruence between students' and parents' expectations. Only 58 percent of students whose parents expected them to attend a four-year college indicated that they planned to be enrolled in a bachelor's degree program in Fall 2013.

Students' Perceptions of College Affordability, Beliefs about Need-Based Financial Aid Eligibility, and Plans to Apply for Financial Aid

The next set of outcomes examines students' perceptions of college affordability, beliefs about whether they will qualify for need-based financial aid, and plans to file a FAFSA. Perceptions of college affordability may shape all students' thinking about whether to continue their education, so all students were included in analyzing this outcome. Students who have no intention of continuing their postsecondary education immediately after high school, however, are not likely to have considered the more specific topics of need-based financial aid eligibility and FAFSA filing plans. Therefore, to avoid muddying the results, investigations of the latter two outcomes were limited to students who planned to continue their education in Fall 2013. As with the first set of outcomes explored in Part II, descriptive statistics are presented first, followed by regression analysis. Almost all of the predictors included are the same, though certain school counselor actions shown in Table 1 have been replaced with school counselor actions that are more specifically focused on financial aid. Because there are many financial aid-oriented actions that counselors and schools may take and they do overlap, only the actions that were statistically significant in the descriptive results for each outcome were retained for that outcome's regression analysis. Students' perceptions of college affordability, included in the prior section of Part II as a factor that counselors may be able to influence, is not included here because it is the outcome of interest in our first analysis and is strongly interconnected with the subsequent two outcomes examined.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

About 69 percent of students had positive views about college affordability as measured by their disagreement or strong disagreement with the idea that their family cannot afford to send them to college (Table 3). The percentage of students with this outlook differed by several school counseling characteristics: counselor caseload, whether schools assisted students and families with FAFSA completion,[21] and whether parents talked to a counselor. Two factors counselors might be able to influence (students' having a greater proportion of friends with four-year college plans and parents' educational expectations for the student) were also significant. The same is true for all controls except for students' sex.

Table 4 includes results once all of these variables are taken into account simultaneously. Here, none of the counseling characteristics were significant. Nevertheless, two factors that counselors might influence that were significant in the descriptive results continued to be positive and significant: students' counting a majority of their close friends as planning to attend a four-year college and parents' having four-year college expectations for their child. As for controls, students' earning a higher math score and parents' possessing bachelor's degrees were associated with significantly greater odds of viewing college as affordable, while being Hispanic rather than white was associated with significantly lower odds.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BEING ABLE TO QUALIFY FOR NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID

Among students who expected to continue their education after high school in Fall 2013, a little less than half (45 percent) believed they would qualify for financial aid based on financial need (Table 3). About a quarter (26 percent) did not believe they would qualify for need-based aid. For some affluent students, the perception that they will not qualify is accurate, but for most students it is not.[22] Also highly relevant is the fact that while students were only roughly a year away from selecting a postsecondary institution, 29 percent indicated that they did not know if they would qualify for this type of aid.

The percentage distribution for this outcome differed by multiple counseling characteristics as well as other factors. Counselors' caseload, the time counselors spent on college activities, schools' assisting students and families with completing the FAFSA, and students' speaking with a counselor were all significantly related to students' sense of their eligibility for need-based financial aid. All of the factors that counselors may be able to influence that are included in the college cost and financial aid analyses (students' participation in college preparation activities, their proportion of friends with four-year college plans, and parents' educational expectations for them) were significant as well. Each control except for race/ethnicity was significant, too.

A multinomial logistic regression was used to assess whether, all else equal, these variables were associated with students' believing that they would qualify for need-based financial aid versus believing that they would not qualify (Panel 1, Table 5) and students' believing that they would qualify for need-based financial aid versus not knowing if they would qualify (Panel 2, Table 5). While students who answered "No" and "Don't know" to this question could also be compared, understanding the factors associated with being in one group versus the other is less policy relevant. It is more important to identify the factors associated with having greater odds of being in the "Yes" category as compared with the "No" and "Don't know" categories.

Beginning with the results presented in the first panel of Table 5, attending a school that has a counselor whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection was associated with students' having 37 percent greater odds of believing they would qualify for need-based financial aid. Likewise, students' talking to a counselor was related to 33 percent greater odds of believing they would qualify. Several controls were also statistically significant. The higher students' math score and the higher their parents' educational attainment, the lower students' odds were of believing they would

[21] Somewhat paradoxically, students attending schools that provide FAFSA completion assistance were less likely to disagree that college is unaffordable (i.e., more likely to agree that college is unaffordable). This result is probably reflecting students' socioeconomic background because Appendix Table 6 showed that schools with higher percentages of poor students were more likely to offer this service. The regression results presented in Table 4 indicate that this factor has no significant relationship once other variables are included in the analysis.

[22] For a discussion on students not knowing that they will qualify for aid and failing to apply, see pages 3–4 in *Simplifying Student Aid: The Case for and Easier, Faster, an More Accurate FAFSA*. Retrieved May 31, 2014, from http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/FAFSA_Report.pdf.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics: Students' Perceptions of College Affordability, Beliefs about Need-Based Financial Aid Eligibility, and Plans to Apply for Financial Aid as of Spring 2012

		Percentage of all students	Percentage of students who expect to continue their education after high school in Fall 2013					
		Student disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Even if you get accepted to college, your family cannot afford to send you."	Student believed he/she will qualify for financial aid based on financial need			Student planned to complete a FAFSA to apply for financial aid		
			Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know[a]
	Total	**69**	**45**	**26**	**29**	**34**	**4**	**62**
Counseling characteristics	School's counselor caseload[1, 2]							
	250 or fewer	77	37	28	35	30	4	67
	251–350	71	43	31	26	33	4	63
	351–450	68	45	27	27	36	5	60
	More than 450	68	49	23	28	32	4	64
	Percentage of hours counseling staff spent on college readiness, selection, and applications[2]							
	10% or less	67	47	28	25	30	6	64
	11% to 20%	69	48	23	29	32	3	64
	21% or more	73	39	31	30	34	4	62
	School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection							
	No	70	41	29	30	31	4	65
	Yes	71	47	27	26	36	4	60
	School offered informational meetings on sources of financial aid, such as scholarships, loans, or grants							
	No	70	44	33	24	33	5	62
	Yes	71	44	27	29	33	4	63
	School offered informational meetings about the FAFSA process							
	No	69	45	32	23	25	5	69
	Yes	71	44	27	29	33	4	63
	School sent out reminders about FAFSA deadlines							
	No	72	42	32	27	32	4	64
	Yes	70	44	27	29	33	4	63
	School offered students and families assistance with completing the FAFSA[1, 2, 3]							
	No	75	40	33	27	29	3	68
	Yes	70	45	26	29	34	5	61
	School offered individual counseling sessions to help students identify possible sources of financial aid							
	No	72	43	27	29	31	4	65
	Yes	70	44	28	28	33	4	62
	Student reports having talked with a high school counselor about options for life after high school[2, 3]							
	No	67	41	28	32	29	4	67
	Yes	71	47	25	28	37	4	59
	Parent respondent reports having talked with a high school counselor about child's options for life after high school[1]							
	No	67	45	27	28	32	4	64
	Yes	73	44	25	31	36	4	60
Characteristics that counselors may be able to influence	Student has participated in a program[b] that provides college preparation[2, 3]							
	No	70	42	26	32	32	4	64
	Yes	70	51	29	20	44	5	52
	Proportion of student's close friends who planned to attend a four-year college[1, 2, 3]							
	Half or fewer	60	47	20	33	34	4	62
	More than half	80	42	32	25	35	4	61
	Parent's expectation for the level of school student will attend in Fall 2013[1, 2]							
	High school	49	56	15	29	34	5	61
	Two-year college or occupational school	63	47	21	32	30	4	66
	Four-year college	79	41	32	27	36	4	60
	Don't know	53	55	9	36	31	3	66
Controls	In ninth grade student planned to enroll in an associate's or bachelor's degree program in the year after high school[1, 2, 3]							
	No	62	45	21	34	27	4	69
	Yes	74	44	29	27	38	4	58
	Student's Spring 2012 mathematics quintile[1, 2, 3]							
	Lowest	59	59	15	25	37	6	57
	Second lowest	56	50	16	34	36	2	62
	Middle	70	45	22	33	28	5	67
	Second highest	75	40	30	30	36	3	61
	Highest	81	37	39	24	36	5	59
	Parents' highest degree attained[1, 2, 3]							
	High school diploma or lower	57	55	15	30	39	3	58
	Associate's degree or certificate	68	49	20	31	33	4	64
	Bachelor's degree or higher	82	33	39	28	31	5	64
	Race/ethnicity[1, 2]							
	White	75	36	34	30	31	4	65
	Black	71	59	17	25	40	4	56
	Hispanic	55	54	16	30	40	3	56
	Asian	75	48	21	30	35	5	60
	Other race[c]	68	50	21	29	33	4	63
	Sex[2, 3]							
	Male	68	41	28	31	30	5	66
	Female	71	48	24	28	39	4	58
	School type[1, 2, 3]							
	Public	69	45	25	29	35	4	61
	Private	85	32	39	28	28	6	66

[a] This don't know category includes: Don't know what FAFSA is, Haven't thought about it, and Don't know if will apply.

[b] Includes college preparation camp, Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP, AVID, and/or MESA.

[c] "Other race" includes non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and students of more than one race.

[1] Differences in students' perceptions of college affordability are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for this predictor.

[2] Among students expecting to continue their education after high school in the fall of 2013, differences in students' believing they will qualify for financial aid based on need are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for this predictor.

[3] Among students expecting to continue their education after high school in the fall of 2013, differences in students' planning to complete a FAFSA to apply for financial aid are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for this predictor.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2W1PAR.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Results: All Students' Perceptions of College Affordability as of Spring 2012

		Student disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Even if you get accepted to college, your family cannot afford to send you."	
	VARIABLE	Odds ratio	Pr > ChiSq
	Intercept	0.224	0.0057 **
Counseling characteristics	School's counselor caseload	1.000	0.6911
	Percentage of hours counseling staff spent on college readiness, selection, and applications		
	(10% or less)	—	—
	11% to 20%	1.181	0.3202
	21% or more	1.061	0.7345
	School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection	0.962	0.8061
	School offered students and families assistance with completing the FAFSA	0.963	0.8255
	Student reports having talked with a high school counselor about options for life after high school	1.144	0.3271
	Parent respondent reports having talked with a high school counselor about child's options for life after high school	1.278	0.0741 †
Characteristics that counselors may be able to influence	Student has participated in a program[a] that provides college preparation	0.896	0.5203
	A majority of student's close friends planned to attend a four-year college	1.821	<.0001 ***
	Parent's expectation for the level of school child will attend in Fall 2013		
	(High school)	—	—
	Two-year college or occupational school	1.732	0.041 †
	Four-year college	2.152	0.0016 **
	Don't know	1.852	0.0537 †
Controls	In ninth grade student planned to enroll in an associate's or bachelor's degree program in the year after high school	1.226	0.0998 †
	Student's Spring 2012 mathematics score	1.021	0.0015 **
	Parents' highest degree attained		
	(High school diploma or lower)	—	—
	Associate's degree or certificate	1.439	0.0504 †
	Bachelor's degree or higher	1.998	0.0001 ***
	Race/ethnicity		
	(White)	—	
	Black	0.948	0.8436
	Hispanic	0.496	0.0002 ***
	Asian	0.529	0.1093
	Other race[b]	0.784	0.2323
	Sex		
	(Male)	—	—
	Female	1.071	0.556
	School type		
	(Public)	—	—
	Private	1.149	0.5404

— Reference category, no estimate calculated.

† p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

[a] Includes college preparation camp, Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP, AVID, and/or MESA.

[b] "Other race" includes non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and students of more than one race.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2W1PAR.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Table 5: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results: Among Students Expecting to Continue Their Education after High School in Fall 2013, Students' Beliefs as of Spring 2012 about Whether They Will Qualify for Need-Based Financial Aid

		Yes vs. No		Yes vs. Don't know	
	VARIABLE	Odds ratio	Pr > ChiSq	Odds ratio	Pr > ChiSq
	Intercept	8.696	0.002 **	1.261	0.663
Counseling characteristics	School's counselor caseload	1.001	0.2217	1.001	0.2905
	Percentage of hours counseling staff spent on college readiness, selection, and applications				
	(10% or less)	—	—	—	—
	11% to 20%	1.099	0.6087	0.791	0.2621
	21% or more	0.885	0.4979	0.723	0.0845 †
	School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection	1.372	0.042 *	1.311	0.0655 †
	School offered students and families assistance with completing the FAFSA	0.974	0.8617	0.997	0.9848
	Student reports having talked with a high school counselor about options for life after high school	1.332	0.0456*	1.377	0.0629 †
	Parent respondent reports having talked with a high school counselor about child's options for life after high school	0.982	0.8946	0.850	0.2382
Characteristics that counselors may be able to influence	Student has participated in a program[a] that provides college preparation	0.878	0.4295	1.563	0.0195 *
	A majority of student's close friends planned to attend a four-year college	0.779	0.1044	1.185	0.2751
	Parent's expectation for the level of school child will attend in Fall 2013				
	(High school)	—	—	—	—
	Two-year college or occupational school	0.772	0.6366	0.951	0.8721
	Four-year college	0.907	0.8534	0.824	0.5567
	Don't know	1.718	0.4108	0.756	0.5536
Controls	In ninth grade student planned to enroll in an associate's or bachelor's degree program in the year after high school	1.073	0.6713	1.412	0.0545 †
	Student's spring 2012 mathematics score	0.968	0.0004***	0.997	0.6857
	Parents' highest degree attained				
	(High school diploma or lower)	—	—	—	—
	Associate's degree or certificate	0.587	0.0051**	0.689	0.0942 †
	Bachelor's degree or higher	0.295	<.0001***	0.557	0.0049 **
	Race/ethnicity				
	(White)	—	—	—	—
	Black	1.789	0.0302*	1.608	0.2339
	Hispanic	2.604	0.0002***	1.346	0.1578
	Asian	3.846	<.0001***	1.546	0.1247
	Other race[b]	1.661	0.0454*	1.145	0.5146
	Sex				
	(Male)	—	—	—	—
	Female	1.337	0.0208*	1.081	0.6137
	School type				
	(Public)	—	—	—	—
	Private	0.933	0.7261	0.989	0.9577

—Reference category, no estimate calculated.

† p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

[a] Includes college preparation camp, Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP, AVID, and/or MESA.

[b] "Other race" includes non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and students of more than one race.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2W1PAR.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

qualify.[23] On the other hand, Hispanic and Asian students had greater odds than white students of thinking they would qualify for need-based aid, and female students had greater odds than male students.

The second panel of Table 5 presents a comparison of students who believed they would qualify for need-based aid with those who did not know whether they would qualify. While none of the counseling characteristics were statistically significant independent of the other variables, one factor that counselors may be able to influence was significant. Students who participated in a program that provided college preparation had greater odds of believing they would qualify for need-based aid.[24] Having a parent with a bachelor's degree or higher was associated with 44 percent lower odds of students' believing they would qualify for aid.[25]

STUDENTS' PLANS TO COMPLETE A FAFSA

Filing a FAFSA is a critical step toward obtaining need-based financial aid from the federal government, states, and many institutions. Yet even when examining students who expected to continue their education after high school in Fall 2013, only about one-third (34 percent) planned to complete a FAFSA (Table 3). Four percent said that they did not plan to file one, and a whopping 62 percent said they did not know if they would. (This "Don't know" percentage includes 44 percent of students who did not know what a FAFSA was, 11 percent who had not thought about it, and 7 percent who did not know if they would apply.)

The percentage of students in the three main categories for FAFSA filing plans presented in the table differed by multiple factors. Among the counseling characteristics presented, statistically significant differences occurred by whether schools assisted families with completing the FAFSA and whether students had spoken to a counselor. There were also significant differences by two other factors that counselors may be able to influence: students' participation in a college preparation activity and the proportion of their friends with four-year college plans. All of the controls except for race/ethnicity were significant, too.

A multinomial regression was again used to compare the effects of these variables, net of their relationships among each other, on whether students expected to complete a FAFSA versus not complete one (Panel 1, Table 6) and on whether students expected to complete a FAFSA versus did not know if they would complete one (Panel 2, Table 6). Again, students in the "No" and "Don't know" categories could also be compared, but the more relevant policy issue is better understanding the factors related to odds of being in the "Yes" category. For this reason, comparisons again are only made with the "Yes" category. The first panel shows that students who attended schools that assisted families with completing the FAFSA had lower odds of planning to file one. This finding is counterintuitive and may be an anomaly.[26] The only other significant factors were being female (associated with greater odds of planning to apply) and attending a private school (associated with lower odds of planning to apply).[27]

Results comparing students who asserted that they would file a FAFSA with those who indicated that they did not know if they would can be viewed in the second panel of Table 6. Here, students' talking to counselors was highly significant. Students who had done so had 57 percent greater odds of indicating plans to complete a FAFSA. In addition, participating in a program or activity that included college preparation was associated with greater odds of planning to apply—43 percent greater odds to be precise. As for controls, female students and students who had postsecondary aspirations by ninth grade had greater odds of filing a FAFSA, while students who had parents with a bachelor's degree had lower odds of doing so.[28]

INTEGRATING THESE REGRESSION RESULTS

Examining these regression results as a whole is helpful in thinking about the direction in which counselors, and other parties interested in helping students make a successful transition into college, might focus their efforts. Table 7 illustrates that students' talking to counselors about their options after high school was the counseling characteristic that was repeatedly statistically significant—even after controlling for a multitude of factors related to students' college actions, plans, and beliefs. This conversation has a significant effect above and beyond specific counselor characteristics and actions. Also, it is significant even when students are matched for characteristics that might be particularly likely to influence students' seeking out a counselor, including parents' having spoken to a counselor, parents' postsecondary expectations for their child as of Spring 2012, and students' postsecondary aspirations as of ninth grade. Therefore, these results suggest that facilitating these conversations is a potential point of leverage in inducing positive college attitudes and actions. The content and length of these conversations should be examined carefully on the ground to test the types of interactions that are most beneficial.

Several factors that counselors may be able to influence were statistically significant as well. First, the regressions suggest that there are potential lessons that counselors can learn from programs providing college preparation. Participating in these activities appear to influence whether students visit a college campus for a program or tour as well as their thinking about qualifying for need-based financial aid. By investigating the factors and activities that make these programs effective, it is possible that these practices could be scaled up and administered by counselors to larger numbers of students. Second, to the extent possible, exploring the most effective way to foster a college-going culture within a school may be helpful, given the fre-

[23] These results may be due in part to these students' greater affluence. Research also suggests that in middle-class and upper middle-class families, parents often handle the financial aid process, causing students from these social class backgrounds to be less focused on finding out financial aid details themselves. For a discussion of this finding, see Radford, A. (2013). *Top Student, Top School? How Social Class Shapes Where Valedictorians Go to College.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

[24] While many of the college preparatory programs included in this measure target low-income students, 43 percent of students who participated had a parent with a bachelor's degree or higher. This fact, combined with the fact that this regression controls for parents' socioeconomic status by using parents' educational attainment as a proxy, suggests that this measure is not merely capturing students who were more likely to qualify for need-based aid and that these activities were having a positive relationship in and of themselves.

[25] This association likely occurs for the same reasons suggested in footnote [23].

[26] It is important to keep in mind that students would not receive school assistance with FAFSA completion until their senior year, so perhaps this finding merely indicates that such efforts do not have a spill-over effect influencing the aid application plans of students in lower grades. This result should not, in the authors' view, be interpreted as suggesting that helping students complete the FAFSA reduces their likelihood of filing one.

[27] The latter result may be capturing the greater wealth and/or income of students attending private schools that is not captured by the parents' educational attainment measure.

[28] Again, this association likely occurs for the same reasons suggested in footnote [23].

Table 6: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results: Among Students Expecting to Continue Their Education after High School in Fall 2013, Students' Plans as of Spring 2013 to Complete a FAFSA to Apply for Financial Aid

		Yes vs. No		Yes vs. Don't know[a]	
	VARIABLE	Odds ratio	Pr > ChiSq	Odds ratio	Pr > ChiSq
	Intercept	1.938	0.8021	0.112	0.0001 ***
Counseling characteristics	School's counselor caseload	1.000	0.7594	1.000	0.9163
	Percentage of hours counseling staff spent on college readiness, selection, and applications				
	(10% or less)	—	—	—	—
	11% to 20%	1.761	0.1544	0.984	0.9268
	21% or more	1.439	0.3427	0.986	0.9324
	School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection	1.190	0.5113	1.155	0.2882
	School offered students and families assistance with completing the FAFSA	0.583	0.0476 *[1]	1.107	0.3949
	Student reports having talked with a high school counselor about options for life after high school	1.391	0.2619	1.565	0.0008 ***
	Parent respondent reports having talked with a high school counselor about child's options for life after high school	1.167	0.5644	1.007	0.9466
Characteristics that counselors may be able to influence	Student has participated in a program[b] that provides college preparation	1.009	0.9789	1.429	0.0302 *
	A majority of student's close friends planned to attend a four-year college	1.022	0.9370	1.073	0.6007
	Parent's expectation for the level of school child will attend in Fall 2013				
	(High school)	—	—	—	—
	Two-year college or occupational school	1.362	0.8863	0.828	0.639
	Four-year college	1.821	0.7782	1.055	0.8819
	Don't know	1.567	0.8496	0.716	0.5198
Controls	In ninth grade student planned to enroll in an associate's or bachelor's degree program in the year after high school	1.166	0.5938	1.678	<.0001 ***
	Student's Spring 2012 mathematics score	1.009	0.6482	1.012	0.1066
	Parents' highest degree attained				
	(High school diploma or lower)	—	—	—	—
	Associate's degree or certificate	0.874	0.8000	0.865	0.4345
	Bachelor's degree or higher	0.449	0.0188 †	0.595	0.001 **
	Race/ethnicity				
	(White)	—	—	—	—
	Black	0.837	0.7851	1.208	0.4853
	Hispanic	1.869	0.2261	1.167	0.4359
	Asian	0.756	0.5399	1.088	0.7378
	Other race[c]	0.624	0.3624	0.806	0.2985
	Sex				
	(Male)	—	—	—	—
	Female	2.294	0.0060 **	1.585	0.0002 ***
	School type				
	(Public)	—	—	—	—
	Private	0.436	0.0234 *	0.748	0.1292

— Reference category, no estimate calculated.

† p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

[a] Don't know category includes: Don't know what FAFSA is, Haven't thought about it, and Don't know if will apply.

[b] Includes college preparation camp, Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP, AVID, and/or MESA.

[c] "Other race" includes non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and students of more than one race.

[1] As explained in footnote 26, this counterintuitive finding is believed to be an anomaly.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2W1PAR.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

quently positive relationship between having a majority of friends with four-year college plans and the student outcomes examined. Third, improving our understanding of how to increase parents' educational expectations for their child could have payoffs, because this factor was significant across four outcomes as well.

Lastly, it is worth noting that the variable capturing students' postsecondary aspirations as of ninth grade was significant for two outcomes. While it is not particularly surprising that it was related to students' having bachelor's degree plans by Spring 2012, the next outcome is less directly related. Specifically, having these early college aspirations shaped FAFSA filing plans even after controlling for parents' educational expectations and limiting the sample to students who (as of 2012) planned to continue their education beyond high school in Fall 2013. Perhaps making plans to pursue college in ninth grade induces students to find out about the financial aid process—or at least find out about it earlier in their college choice process. Further research should examine the effect of early college plans on when students acquire financial aid knowledge and the quality and accuracy of their knowledge. The extent to which early and better knowledge shapes college enrollment decisions should also be explored.

Table 7: Summary Table: Significant Predictors in Logistic and Multinomial Logistic Regressions Examining Students' Actions, Plans, and Beliefs as of Spring 2012

		All students				Students who expect to continue their education after high school in Fall 2013	
		Student had searched the Internet for college options or read college guides	Student had attended a program at, or taken a tour of, a college campus	Student planned to enroll in a bachelor's degree program in the fall of 2013	Student disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Even if you get accepted to college, your family cannot afford to send you."	Student believed he/she will qualify for financial aid based on financial need	Student plannned to complete a FAFSA to apply for financial aid
Counseling characteristics	School's counselor caseload						
	Percentage of hours counseling staff spent on college readiness, selection, and applications						
	School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection						
	School held information sessions for students and parents about college						
	School offered students help identifying criteria for selecting colleges to which to apply such as majors offered, cost, or entry requirements						
	School held or participated in college fairs						
	School offered informational meetings on sources of financial aid, such as scholarships, loans, or grants						
	School offered students and families assistance with completing the FAFSA						*[1]
	Student reports having talked with a high school counselor about options for life after high school	*	*	*			*
	Parent respondent reports having talked with a high school counselor about child's options for life after high school						
Characteristics that counselors may be able to influence	Student's perception of college affordability measured as level of disagreement with the statement, "Even if you get accepted to college, your family cannot afford to send you."						
	Student has participated in a program[a] that provides college preparation		*			*	
	A majority of student's close friends planned to attend a four-year college	*		*	*	*	
	Parent's expectation for the level of school child will attend in Fall 2013	*	*	*	*		
Controls	In ninth grade student planned to enroll in an associate's or bachelor's degree program in the year after high school			*			*
	Student's Spring 2012 mathematics score	*		*	*	*	
	Parents' highest degree attained			*	*	*	*
	Race/ethnicity	*			*	*	
	Sex	*					*
	School type						

* p<.05.

[a] Includes college preparation camp, Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP, AVID, and/or MESA.

[1] As explained in footnote 26, this counterintuitive finding is believed to be an anomaly.

NOTES: : Cells for characteristics not included in the regression analyses for these outcomes are shaded in gray.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Next Steps

In the authors' last NACAC report, the students analyzed were in ninth grade. In this report, these students were now two-and-a-half years closer to being able to enter postsecondary education, but they were still making plans and taking actions that precede actual postsecondary enrollment. Counselors had another year to influence these students' trajectories, and much of their work with students on their post-high school plans was yet to be done. Our subsequent report will use the next round of HSLS:09 data to examine the relationship between counseling characteristics and more definitive outcomes on which schools' and counselors' postsecondary success is often judged, such as students' FAFSA filing and the extent to which students enroll in degree programs and institutions that match their level of academic preparation.

Data and Methods Appendix

A previous NACAC report, *Preparing Students for College: What High Schools Are Doing and How Their Actions Influence Ninth Graders' College Attitudes, Aspirations and Plans,* used data from the base year of the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09). This current report analyzes data from the first follow-up of this study.

HSLS:09 is the fifth in a series of longitudinal studies conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) since 1972. NCES designed each of these studies to provide data on students' paths through high school and into the labor market and/or postsecondary education. In each study, students, including those who leave high school without graduating, complete an initial academic assessment and survey in the base year of the study. They also complete follow-up surveys multiple times during and after their high school years. To obtain contextual data regarding these students' school and family experiences, data are also collected from parents, teachers, school administrators, and school counselors during some waves of data collection. This section briefly describes the design of HSLS and the methods employed in these analyses with the goal of providing readers with contextual information for interpreting the findings presented in the report.

HSLS:09 DATA

HSLS:09 began with a sample of 944 U.S. public and private high schools, each of which provided a list of all ninth graders enrolled in Fall 2009. Students were then sampled from the complete enrollment list of each sampled school. Data collection in 2009 included a questionnaire and a mathematics assessment completed by each student as well as questionnaires completed by the student's parent, mathematics and science teachers, school administrator, and the lead counselor in the school.

The first follow-up, conducted in 2012, included a mathematics assessment and a survey of students as well as a survey of the principal and counselor (typically the lead counselor) of each student's 2009 school.[29] Both the principal and counselor surveys report on characteristics and activities of the school, but not on individual sampled students. Parent surveys, providing data on individual students' families and home lives, were administered for a subsample of students. Approximately 21,000 students have a first follow-up student survey and almost 9,000 of them also have a first follow-up survey from their parents.

In all of its sample surveys, NCES provides weights to be used in analyses in order to ensure that estimates obtained from the sample respondents represent statistics for the national population. For example, because parent data were available for only 40 percent of responding students in the HSLS:09 first follow-up, a weight was computed for each student so that estimates generated from the data take into account whether that student had parent data or not.

For each analysis presented in this report, a specific weight was chosen depending on whether the data analyzed were collected in the base year, first follow-up, or both, and whether the data were provided by parents, students, administrators, or lead counselors. *Despite the different weights used, estimates from all analyses represent Fall 2009 ninth-grade students as of Spring 2012.* In Spring 2012, most of these 2009 ninth graders were eleventh graders (88 percent).[30] In order to understand the way questions were framed and the responses given, it is useful to view student respondents mainly as students in the spring of their junior year of high school. This means that assuming normal academic progress, these student respondents will have completed high school in Spring 2013, and, assuming they continue their education in the following academic year, they will have entered postsecondary education in Fall 2013.[31]

A number of analyses in this report include data provided by parents, school administrators, and current counselors in students' base-year schools. Although the report presents these findings in terms of what parents, administrators, or counselors said, the estimates actually represent students—e.g., "One-quarter of counselors reported that three-quarters or more of their schools' eleventh and twelfth graders took advantage of school-provided college fairs, help in identifying criteria for selecting colleges to which to apply, and completing college or university applications." This would be more accurately, but more clumsily, written as "For one-quarter of students, the lead counselors in the schools they attended as ninth graders in 2009 reported that, in 2012, three-quarters or more of their schools' eleventh and twelfth graders took advantage of . . ." To spare readers the mental gymnastics needed to interpret the more accurate description of the findings, we have simplified the text at the expense of perfect accuracy.

ANALYSIS METHODS

For each of the various school, principal, counselor, student, and parent actions discussed, the analyses presented in this report are designed to answer one of two fundamental questions:

1. How many students are affected by the counseling practice or school characteristic in question? How many students have particular beliefs regarding postsecondary education or take particular steps toward enrolling while they are in high school?

2. What factors are associated with the frequency or likelihood that a given action is taken or that a given outcome occurs? In particular, what is the relationship between counseling practices and students' actions, plans, and beliefs about entering postsecondary education?

The report addresses these questions through two analysis techniques. First, it presents the observed frequency of outcomes with

[29] For students who had transferred to a different school since the base year, one school administrator from each transfer school was asked to complete an abbreviated version of the school administrator questionnaire. Counselors at transfer schools were not asked to complete a questionnaire.

[30] The remaining 12 percent fall into the following categories: enrolled in another grade or ungraded program (6 percent), homeschooled (1 percent), graduated early (1 percent), left without a diploma or other certificate of completion (3 percent), or unable to answer the survey due to a language barrier or disability (1 percent).

[31] Further detail concerning the methods employed in collecting the data and weights is available in the data file documentation for the first follow-up. See *High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09) Base Year to First Follow-Up Data File Documentation.* Retrieved July 28, 2014, from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2014361.

descriptive statistics—e.g., the percentage of schools that provided a particular kind of assistance in applying to college or the percentage of students who had searched the Internet for college options or read college guides. The HSLS:09 sample design and weighting procedures ensure that the estimates derived from these data accurately represent the practices and activities of U.S. high school students and their schools, school counselors, principals, and parents in 2012 and differences in those practices and activities among subgroups of students and schools. To assess whether observed differences were the result of chance, Student's *t*-tests and Rao-Scott Chi-squared tests were conducted to warrant all claims of differences made in the text. Differences that were statistically significant at the .05 level based on Chi-squared tests are noted and presented throughout the report. When comparisons between two specific estimates are made in the text, *t*-tests were used to confirm that the particular difference of interest was statistically significant at the .05 level.

Decades' worth of education research has demonstrated that such subgroup differences—e.g., differences between schools that serve primarily low-income vs. middle- or high-income students—are long standing and that many characteristics of students or schools associated with these differences are found together or *covary*. Family income and student achievement, for instance, covary: Low-income students often have lower academic achievement levels than their higher-income peers.

To begin to tease apart the effects of characteristics that covary, Part II of this report includes the results of logistic regression analyses, which estimate the effects of a counseling or student characteristic on an outcome of interest while taking into account the effects of other variables that also affect the same outcome, as well as descriptive statistics. If a school characteristic—e.g., whether the school's counseling staff includes at least one counselor who specializes in helping students with selecting colleges and completing applications—is less likely to occur among public schools, logistic regression estimates the independent effects of these variables on student outcomes—e.g., whether students plan to enroll in postsecondary education immediately after high school.

Logistic regression is used in this report because the outcomes analyzed tend to be binary (i.e., either a school did something or it did not), and the results of the analyses are expressed in terms of odds ratios. To understand odds ratios, it can be useful to review the concept of odds, which is related to and easily confused with percentages. This section explains the concepts of odds and odds ratio using the percentages presented below: 87 percent of students who had talked with a high school counselor about options for life after high school also reported they had searched the Internet for college options or read college guides. Among students who had not had such a conversation, relatively fewer (75 percent) had conducted an Internet search or read guides.

Odds, in simple terms, are the ratio of the number of times an event occurs to the number of times it does not (or vice versa). In this example, the odds that the first group (those who spoke with a counselor) conducted an Internet search or read guides are 6.7 to 1 (i.e., 87/[100-87]), and the odds for the second group are 3 to 1 (i.e., 75/[100-75]). Thus, although both the observed percentages and the odds indicate that the first group was more likely than the second group to take the step of searching the Internet or reading guides, the numerical values of these two measures are very different, and the relationship between these two sets of values is not intuitive.

An odds ratio can be used to represent the relationship between the odds that the members of two groups experienced the same outcome. The odds ratio is calculated by dividing the odds for the first group by the odds for the second group. An odds ratio of 1.0 indicates that the odds of the two groups experiencing the outcome are the same. An odds ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that students in the first group are more likely than those in the second group to experience the outcome. Odds ratios of less than 1.0 indicate that the odds that the outcome will occur for the first group are lower than the odds that it will occur for the second; in other words, the first group is less likely than the second group to experience the outcome.

In the example discussed above, the odds ratio corresponding to whether the two groups of students conduct an Internet search or read college guides is 6.7/3 or 2.33. This odds ratio is based on simple percentages. In logistic regression, the odds ratio corresponding to an independent variable is computed to take into account, or adjust for, the relationships among all other independent variables in the equation or model. The adjusted odds ratio for whether students spoke with a counselor, 1.934 (Table 2), indicates that once other variables are taken into consideration, students who speak with a high school counselor about post-high school options have 93 percent higher odds of conducting an Internet search or reading college guides. The difference between these odds ratios, 2.33 – 1.93 or 0.4, is accounted for by the fact that whether students speak with counselors covaries with other variables in the model that also have positive relationships with whether students conduct Internet searches or read college guides.

The tables in Part II of the report present many adjusted odds ratios, each of which has been tested for statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Statistically significant odds ratios are indicated with asterisks and are discussed in the text.

Data and Methods Appendix

Appendix Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Schools with the Following School Characteristics

	Percentage
School type	
Public	91
Private	7
Missing	3
School size	
0–499	16
500–999	21
1,000–1,499	18
1,500–1,999	19
2,000 or more	22
Missing	4
School locale	
Urban	30
Suburban	28
Town	12
Rural	28
Missing	3
Schools' college admissions test score quintile[a]	
Lowest (400–905)	11
Second lowest (906–990)	14
Middle (991–1030)	10
Second highest (1031–1104)	10
Highest (1105–1600)	11
Missing	45
Among public schools only, percentage of student body receiving free or reduced-price lunch	
0–19%	14
20–39%	24
40–59%	25
60% or more	28
Missing	9

[a] College admissions test score quintile results are based on the average SAT or ACT score of the school's graduating senior test-takers. ACT scores were converted to equivalent SAT scores and the scores presented in each quintile represent combined verbal and math SAT scores. Quintiles were calculated using the schools in the sample that were not missing on this measure.

NOTES: Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Appendix Table 2: Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Counselors at Their School Were Assigned in Various Ways, by Other Statistically Significant School Characteristics

	By students' last name	To a specific grade level	To all students	By learning community
Total	**57**	**39**	**27**	**13**
School size				
0–499	12	13	86	3
500–999	47	35	37	7
1,000–1,499	65	34	21	9
1,500–1,999	68	29	34	20
2,000 or more	79	19	34	24
School locale				
Urban	62		35	22
Suburban	73		31	13
Town	39		46	8
Rural	45		48	6
Schools' college admissions test score quintile[a]				
Lowest	54			26
Second lowest	50			5
Middle	60			11
Second highest	76			6
Highest	68			12
Among public schools only, percentage of student body receiving free or reduced-price lunch				
0–19%	79	12		13
20–39%	65	26		6
40–59%	56	32		9
60% or more	48	26		22

[a] See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Counselor respondents were able to select more than one assignment method. Differences within the school characteristics presented (not in gray) are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Appendix Table 3: Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Had One or More Counselors Whose Primary Responsibility Was Assisting Students with College Selection, by Other Statistically Significant School Characteristics

	Percentage
Total	**37**
School locale	
Urban	47
Suburban	34
Town	27
Rural	35

NOTES: Differences by school locale are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Appendix Table 4: Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered Help with College Admissions Tests, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics

	Providing assistance with exam registration fees and fee waivers	Providing assistance with exam registration
Total	**97**	**95**
School type		
Public	97	
Private	82	
School size		
0–499	92	98
500–999	96	98
1,000–1,499	98	97
1,500–1,999	98	92
2,000 or more	99	90
School locale		
Urban		89
Suburban		94
Town		98
Rural		99
Schools' college admissions test score quintile[a]		
Lowest		99
Second lowest		96
Middle		97
Second highest		94
Highest		83
Among public schools only, percentage of student body receiving free or reduced-price lunch		
0–19%		86
20–39%		96
40–59%		96
60% or more		97

[a] See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented (not in gray) are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Appendix Table 5: Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of College Information Help, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics

	Percentage
Holding information sessions for students and parents about college	
Total	**94**
School size	
0–499	84
500-999	96
1,000–1,499	96
1,500–1,999	95
2,000 or more	94
Assisting students with completing college or university applications	
Total	**98**
Schools' college admissions test score quintile[a]	
Lowest	99
Second lowest	97
Middle	99
Second highest	98
Highest	90

[a] See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Appendix Table 6: Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Offered This Type of Help with the Financial Aid Process, by Statistically Significant School Characteristics

		School type		Schools' college admissions test score quintile[a]					Among public schools only, percentage of student body receiving free or reduced-price lunch			
	Total	Public	Private	Lowest	Second lowest	Middle	Second highest	Highest	0–19%	20–39%	40–59%	60% or more
Making information about aid available for students to explore on their own, such as flyers and pamphlets	**96**	97	87									
Offering informational meetings about the FAFSA process	**95**	96	81	98	97	98	93	84	87	97	98	97
Offering informational meetings on sources of financial aid, such as scholarships, loans, or grants	**88**	89	77									
Assisting with completing financial aid applications other than the FAFSA	**85**	87	65	95	81	88	83	72	75	85	88	95
Providing computer access for completing the FAFSA	**79**	82	47	89	81	82	68	56	51	78	85	96
Assisting students and families with completing the FAFSA	**78**	80	53	91	77	78	76	55	55	75	84	92
Sending out reminders of FAFSA deadlines	**76**								67	71	80	84

[a] See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented (not in gray) are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Data and Methods Appendix

Appendix Table 7: Percentage of Counselors Reporting That Their School Tracked Students in the Following Ways, by Other Statistically Significant School Characteristics

	Percentage
Tracks all former students using a student or alumni survey	
Total	**49**
Among public schools only, percentage of student body receiving free or reduced-price lunch	
0–19%	65
20–39%	48
40–59%	46
60% or more	38
Tracks college enrollees' college persistence beyond the first year in some way	
Total	**37**
School locale	
Urban	32
Suburban	32
Town	38
Rural	46

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.

Appendix Table 8: Percentage of Students Selecting an Individual as Most Influential in Their Thinking about Education after High School, by Other Statistically Significant School Characteristics

	Hired counselor	Family member	Self
Total	**0.3**	**6.9**	**28.0**
School locale			
Urban	0.4		
Suburban	0.4		
Town	0.0		
Rural	0.0		
Schools' college admissions test score quintile[a]			
Lowest		8.7	
Second lowest		7.8	
Middle		6.2	
Second highest		4.4	
Highest		4.4	
Among public schools only, percentage of student body receiving free or reduced-price lunch			
0–19%		4.2	31.3
20–39%		5.5	31.0
40–59%		8.5	27.2
60% or more		8.0	25.8

[a] See Appendix Table 1 for more details about this variable.

NOTES: Differences within the school characteristics presented (not in gray) are statistically significant at the .05 level or below. Estimates are weighted by W2STUDENT.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, First Follow-Up Restricted Use File.