

School Counselor Perspectives on Career Readiness

Highlights from a National Survey of School Counselors

School counselors are supporting students' career readiness amid a landscape of rapidly-evolving pathways and rising needs—often with limited time and limited usable data. Here are highlights from what school counselors across the US told Britebound and ASCA*.

Measuring Success

Successful career readiness looks different by grade level, and is challenging to measure. The top indicators of “success” in career readiness vary:

High school counselors' top indicator is **student awareness of all available postsecondary options**

58%

Middle school counselors' top indicator of successful career readiness is **awareness of their skills and interests**

52%

Through open-ended responses, elementary school counselors focused on early

**curiosity
and
exposure**

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We only look at grad rates and college-bound; there needs to be a way to measure trades, workforce, and military.

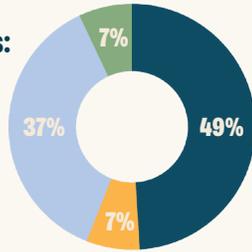
—High School Counselor, Nebraska

School counselors have different experiences with how their school or district measures success in career readiness.

- **56%** say it does measure effectively
- **44%** say it does not measure effectively

My school/district is effective in measuring students' career readiness:

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree



In open-ended responses, school counselors said they wanted:

- Student-centered metrics that capture **engagement, reflection, and learning** over time
- Focus on a broader range of postsecondary outcomes, including **workforce, military, apprenticeships, and trades**
- **Data systems that inform practice**, rather than producing one-time compliance reports

Opportunities and Supports

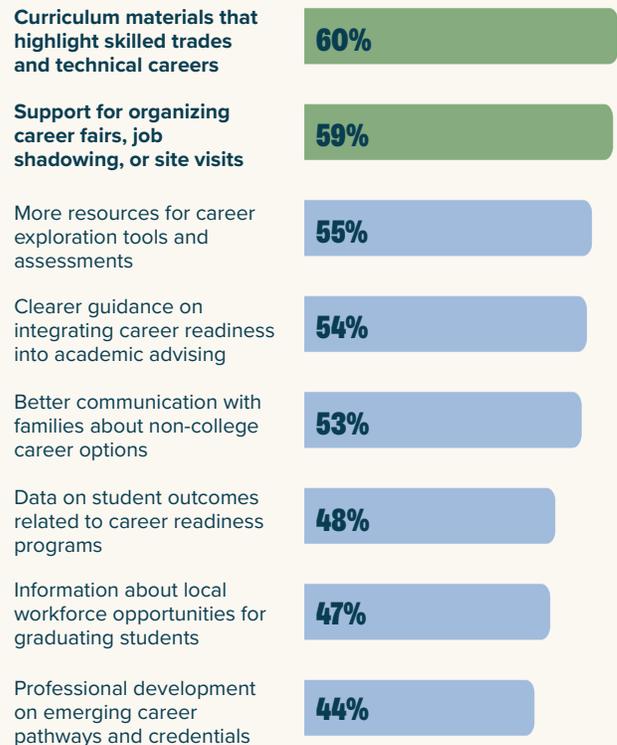
A wide range of career readiness programming exists—but access varies by grade level, geography, and capacity.

School counselors said the following would be most helpful in their work supporting student career readiness:

High School Counselors feel these would improve support of student career readiness:

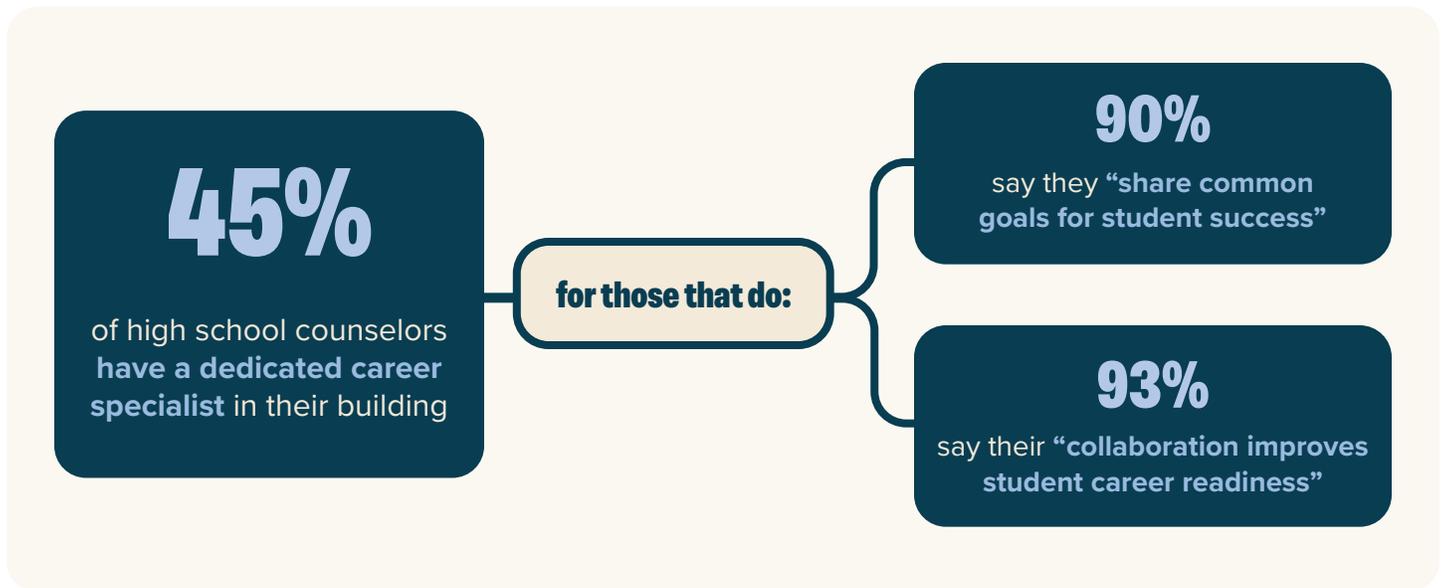


Middle School Counselors feel these would improve support of student career readiness:



Career Specialists

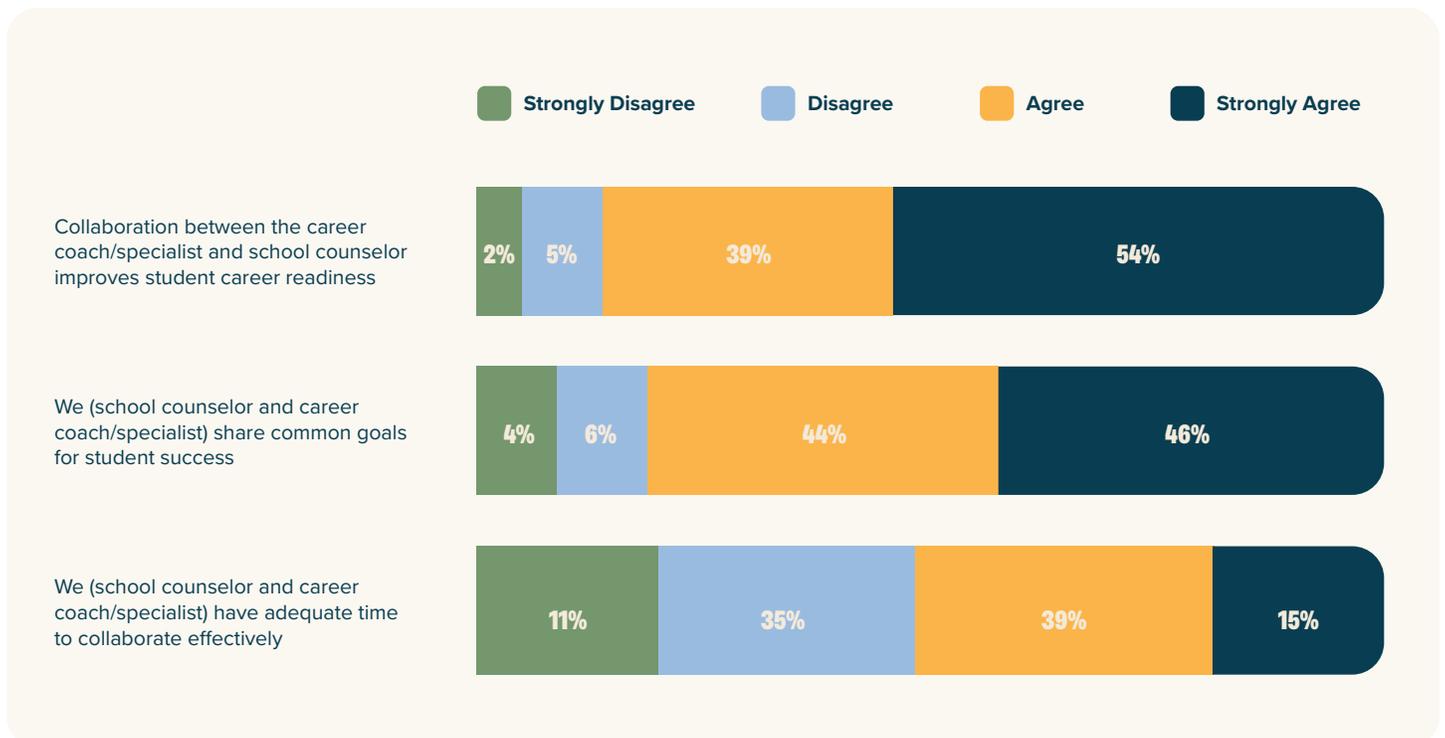
Career specialists (professionals who specifically focus on helping students navigate their career development journey) are valued as collaborators with school counselors, when they are available.



“”

We work together, along with teachers, to make sure every student has a purposeful plan when they leave us.

—High School Counselor, Arizona



“”

[We need] ways to help teachers integrate career into their curricula and strategies for counselors to support after. It shouldn't be seen as a separate issue—should be integrated throughout a student's day.

—Middle School Counselor, Colorado

Takeaways

- School counselors need access to better data that capture more than just college-going rates.
- Career specialists can effectively support school counselors' work. More access to career specialists and more time for school counselors to collaborate with them would be valuable.
- Career readiness programming should be more coherent and connected across grade levels, from elementary school through high school graduation.



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