

How Can High School Counseling Shape Students' Postsecondary Attendance?

Exploring the Relationship between High School Counseling and Students' Subsequent Postsecondary Enrollment

Introduction

- Throughout the last decade, only two-thirds of high school completers attended postsecondary education within the same calendar year that they finish high school.¹
- Many factors influence whether a student attends postsecondary education after high school including the students' academic ability, family finances, and career aspirations. Information students receive from parents, peers, teachers, and counselors may also influence whether, when, and at what level they attend postsecondary education.

This report examines the relationship between the high school counseling context and students' postsecondary attendance.

1. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014) *Digest of Education Statistics*. Table 302.10. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/d14_302.10asp

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the counseling context at a student's high school and the student's postsecondary outcomes?
2. What counseling context factors are associated with a student's postsecondary outcomes, holding other student and school characteristics constant?

Outcome Measures

The study explored the effects of student and counselor characteristics on five postsecondary attendance-related outcomes, including whether a student:

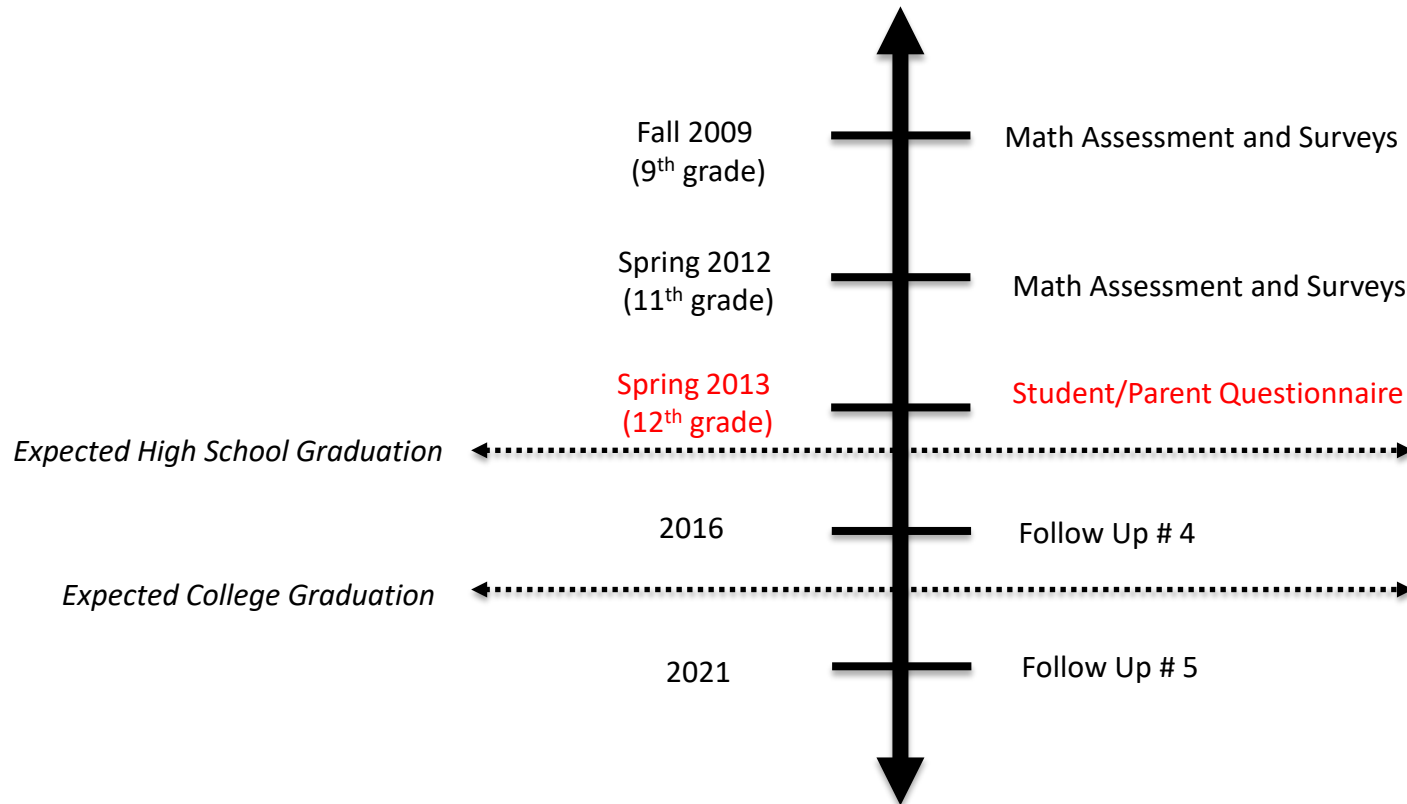
1. Met one-on-one with a counselor to discuss college admission
2. Met one-on-one- with a counselor to discuss financial aid
3. Submitted a FAFSA before Fall 2013
4. Attended college in Fall 2013
5. Attended a Bachelor's degree program in Fall 2013

Data

High School Longitudinal Study of 2009

- Nationally representative, longitudinal study of over 23,000 9th grade students enrolled in 944 public and private schools
- Follows students through high school, postsecondary education, and into the workforce
- Surveyed students, parents, school counselors, school administrators and math and science teachers
- Incorporated a mathematics assessment which tested algebra, problem-solving, and reasoning skills

High School Longitudinal Study Timeline



This report analyzes data collected during the third wave of the study in 2013.

Part I

An Overview of the 2013 High School Completers

Student Characteristics

Variables	Percent	N
Student characteristics		
Female	51	14,700
Race/ethnicity		
White	53	14,700
Black	13	14,700
Hispanic	21	14,700
Asian	4	14,700
Other race ¹	9	14,700
Attended a private high school	8	14,500
Parents' highest degree attained		
High school diploma or lower	40	14,700
Associate's degree or certificate	22	14,700
Bachelor's degree or higher	38	14,700
In ninth grade, student planned to enroll in an associate's or bachelor's degree program in the year after high school	65	14,300
Quintile of 11th grade mathematics exam score		
First (lowest)	16	14,700
Second	18	14,700
Third	20	14,700
Fourth	22	14,700
Fifth (highest)	24	14,700

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Counseling Program Characteristics

Counseling characteristics in 11th grade		
Percentage of hours counseling staff spent on college preparation		N
10% or less	16	12,500
11% to 20%	38	12,500
21% or more	47	12,500
School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications and/or college selection	41	12,800
School held or participated in college fairs	92	12,800
School helped students identify criteria for selecting colleges	98	12,800
School sent reminders of FAFSA deadlines	76	12,800
School offered informational meetings on sources of financial aid	88	12,700
School helped students/families complete FAFSA	78	12,800

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence

		N
Perceptions of college affordability in 11th grade		
Strongly disagreed that college is affordable	7	14,300
Disagreed that college is affordable	23	14,300
Agreed that college is affordable	49	14,300
Strongly agreed that college is affordable	21	14,300
Participated in a program that provided college preparation by 11th grade ²	21	14,600
Proportion of close friends who planned in 11th grade to attend a four-year college in Fall 2013		
Less than half	34	14,600
More than half	51	14,600
Don't know	15	14,600
Parent's expectation when child was in ninth grade for the highest level of education child would achieve		
High school or lower	6	11,800
Some college but no bachelor's degree	9	11,800
Bachelor's degree	31	11,800
Graduate degree	42	11,800
Don't know	11	11,800
Student reported having talked to high school counselor in ninth grade about going to college	18	14,300
When child was in 11th grade, parent reported having talked with a high school counselor about child's options for life after high school	50	6,000

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Student Outcomes

Outcomes	N	
Met one on one with counselor to discuss college admissions in 12th grade	78	12,400
Met one on one with counselor to discuss financial aid in 12th grade	55	12,500
Submitted a FAFSA by Fall 2013	76	13,400
Attended postsecondary education in Fall 2013	80	12,500
Attended a bachelor's degree program in Fall 2013	50	12,500

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Part II

Connecting a School's Counseling Context and Students' Postsecondary Outcomes

Met with Counselor in 12th Grade to Discuss College Admissions

Logistic Regression Results:

Students' Meeting with Counselor About College

The following had a significant effect on whether a student in 12th grade met with a counselor to discuss college admission:

Counseling Characteristics

- Percentage of time counseling staff spent on college readiness
- School held or participated in college fairs

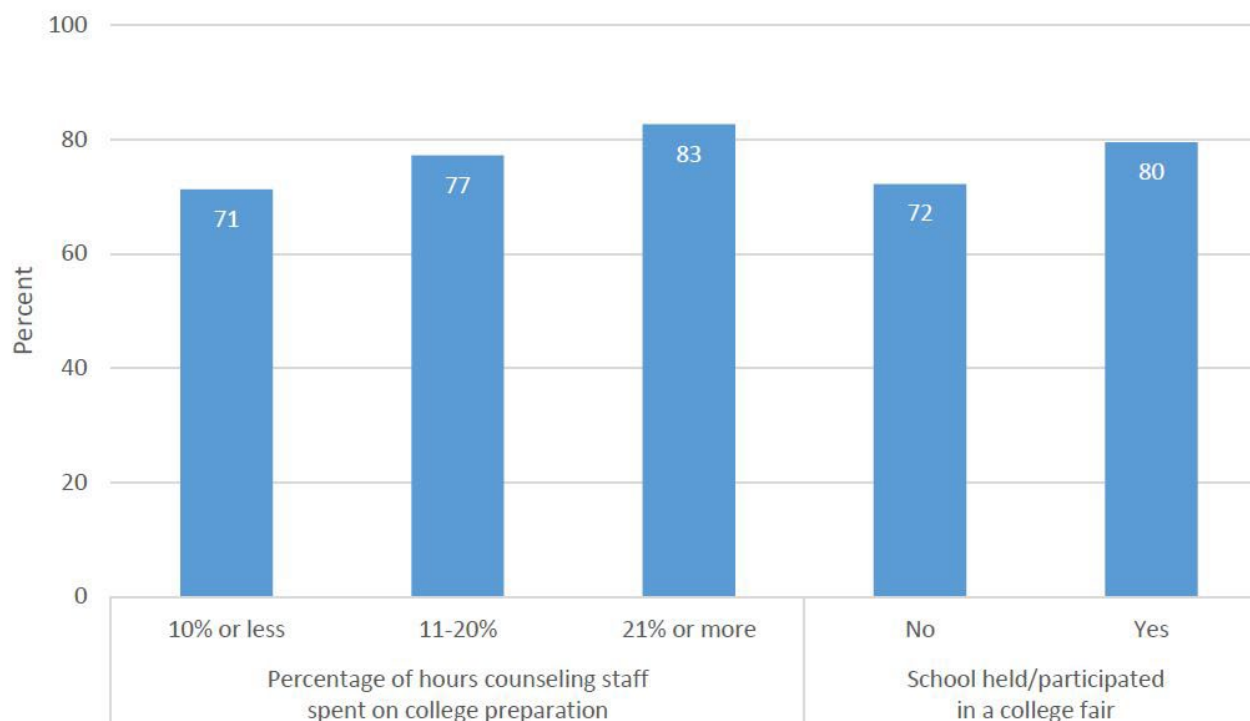
Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence

- Participated in a college prep program by 11th grade
- Proportion of close friends who planned in 11th grade to attend a four-year college in Fall 2013
- Parents' expectations when child was in 9th grade for the child's highest level of education
- Student reported talking to counselor in 9th grade about college
- Parent spoke with counselor by time child was in 11th grade about options for life after high school

Student Characteristics

- School Type
- Mathematics exam score
- Parents' highest degree attained
- Race

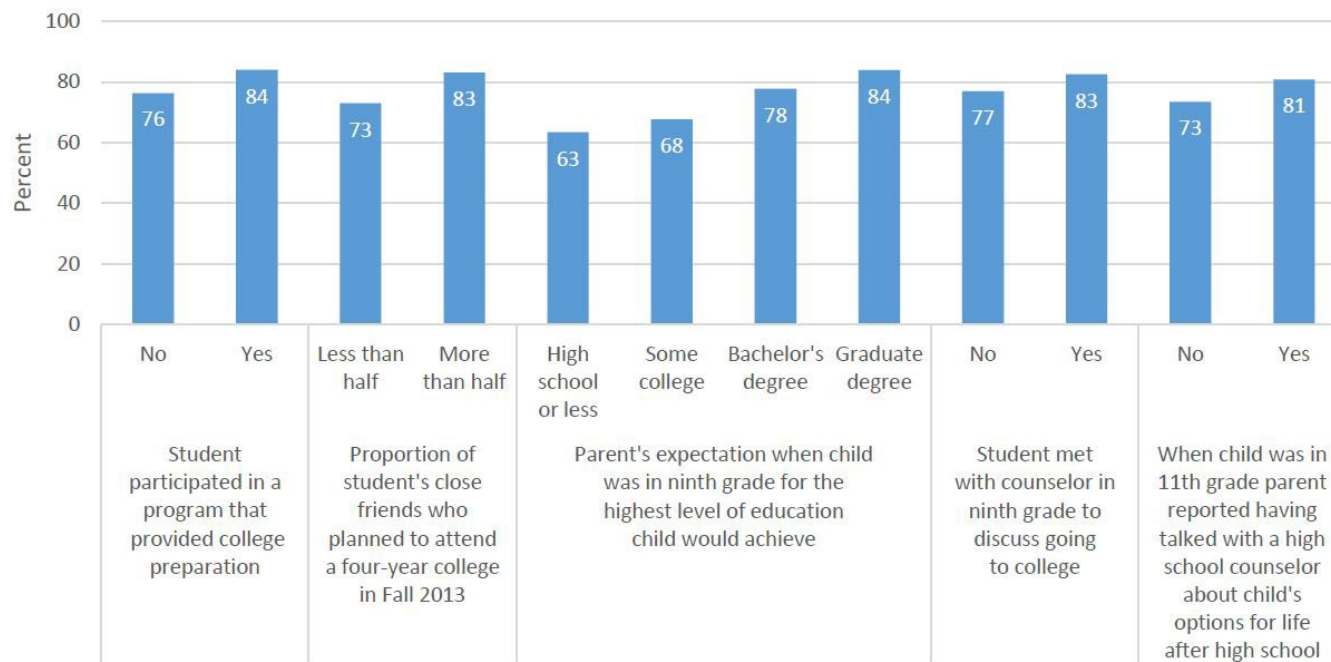
Percent of Students Who Discussed College Admissions in 12th Grade with Counselor, by Counselor Characteristics



Notes: Estimates are weighted by W3W1W2STU, and the rounded sample size was 10,700-10,900 observations.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Percent of Students Who Discussed College Admissions in 12th Grade with Counselor, by Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence



Notes: Estimates are weighted by W3W1W2STU, and the rounded sample size was 10,200-12,300 observations for all analyses except whether a parent met with a counselor by 11th grade, which had a rounded sample size of 5,100..

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Met with Counselor in 12th Grade to Discuss Financial Aid

Logistic Regression Results: Students' Meeting with Counselor About Financial Aid

The following had a significant effect on whether a student in 12th grade met with a counselor to discuss financial aid:

Counseling Characteristics

- School had one or more counselors whose primary responsibility was college applications/selection
- School offered informational meetings on sources of financial aid

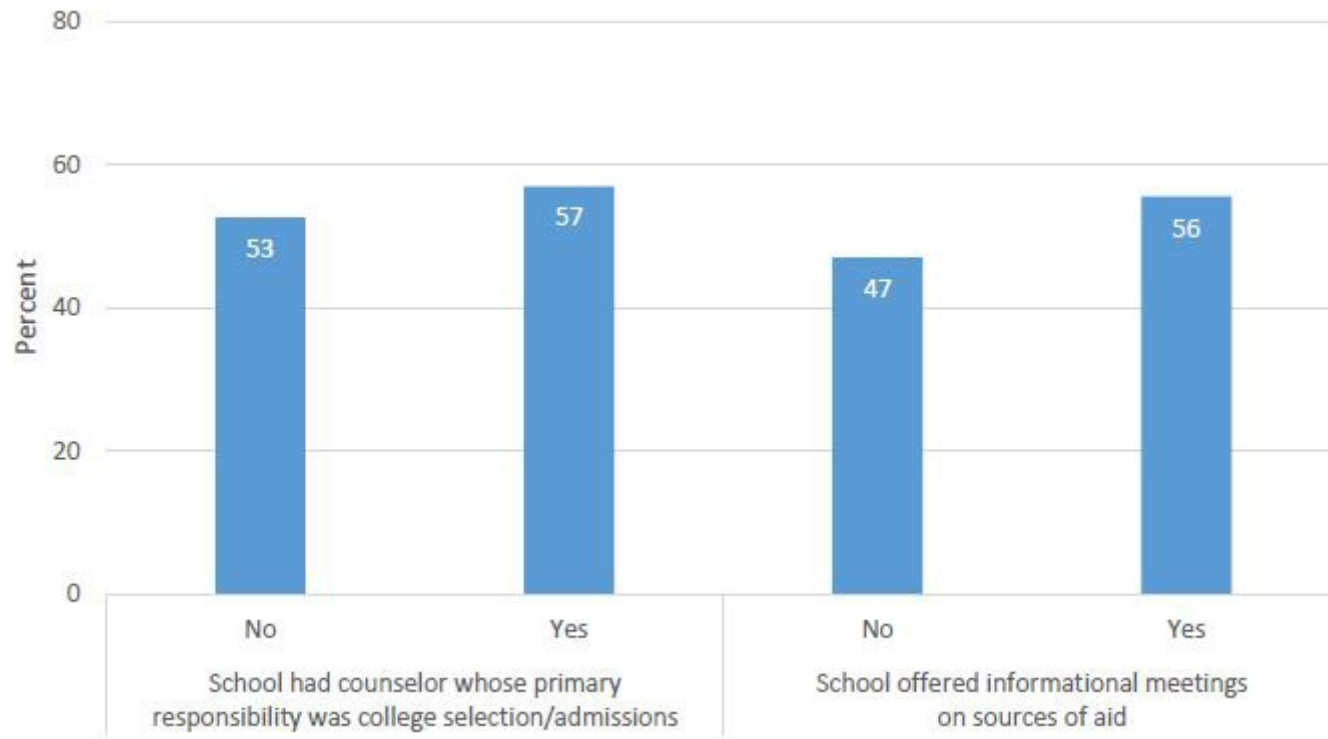
Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence

- Participated in a college prep program by 11th grade
- Parents' expectations when child was in 9th grade for the child's highest level of education
- Student reported talking to counselor in 9th grade about college
- Parent spoke with counselor by time their child was in 11th grade about options for life after high school

Student Characteristics

- Parents' highest degree attained
- Race
- Sex

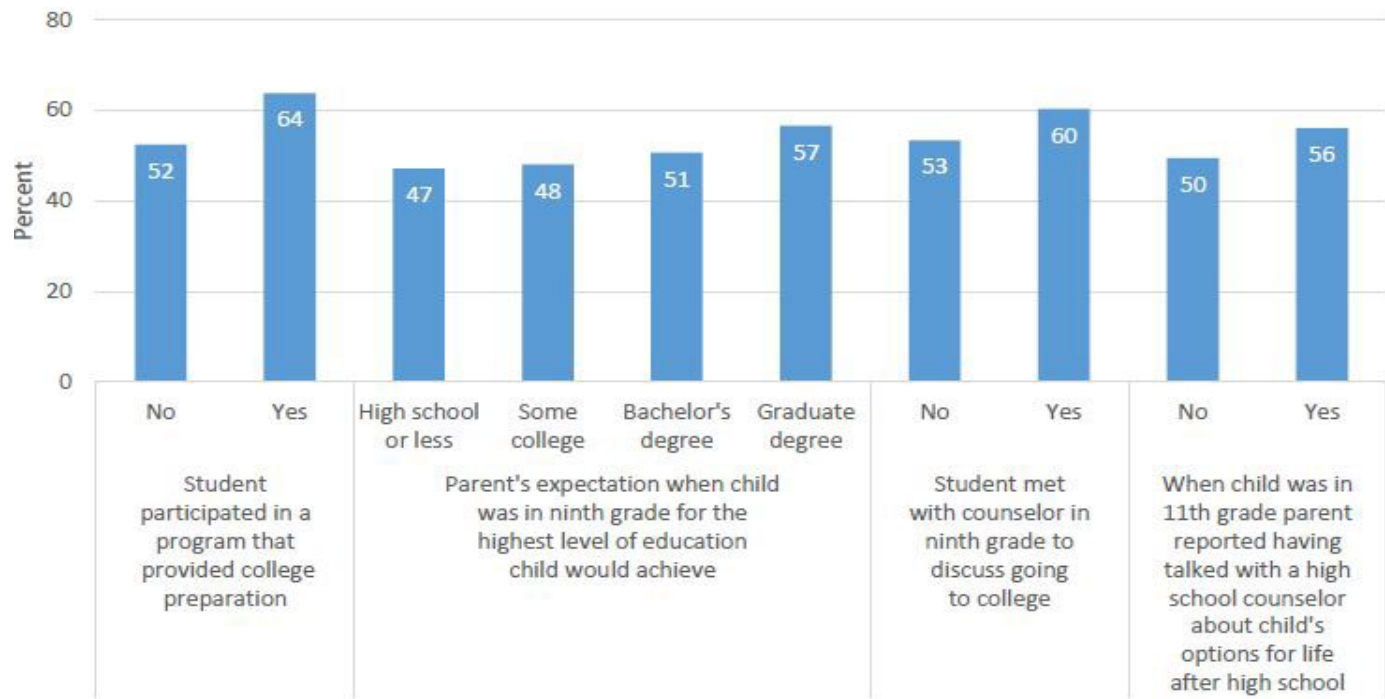
Percent of Students Who Discussed Financial Aid in 12th Grade with Counselor, by Counselor Characteristics



Notes: Estimates are weighted by W3W1W2STU, and the rounded sample size was 10,900- 11,000 observations.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Percent of Students Who Discussed Financial Aid in 12th Grade with Counselor, by Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence



Notes: Estimates are weighted by W3W1W2STU, and the rounded sample size was 10,300 -12,400 observations for all analyses except whether a parent met with a counselor by 11th grade, which had a rounded sample size of 5,100..

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

FAFSA Submission by Fall 2013

NACAC

Logistic Regression Results: FAFSA Submission

The following had a significant effect on whether a student submitted a FAFSA by Fall 2013:

Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence

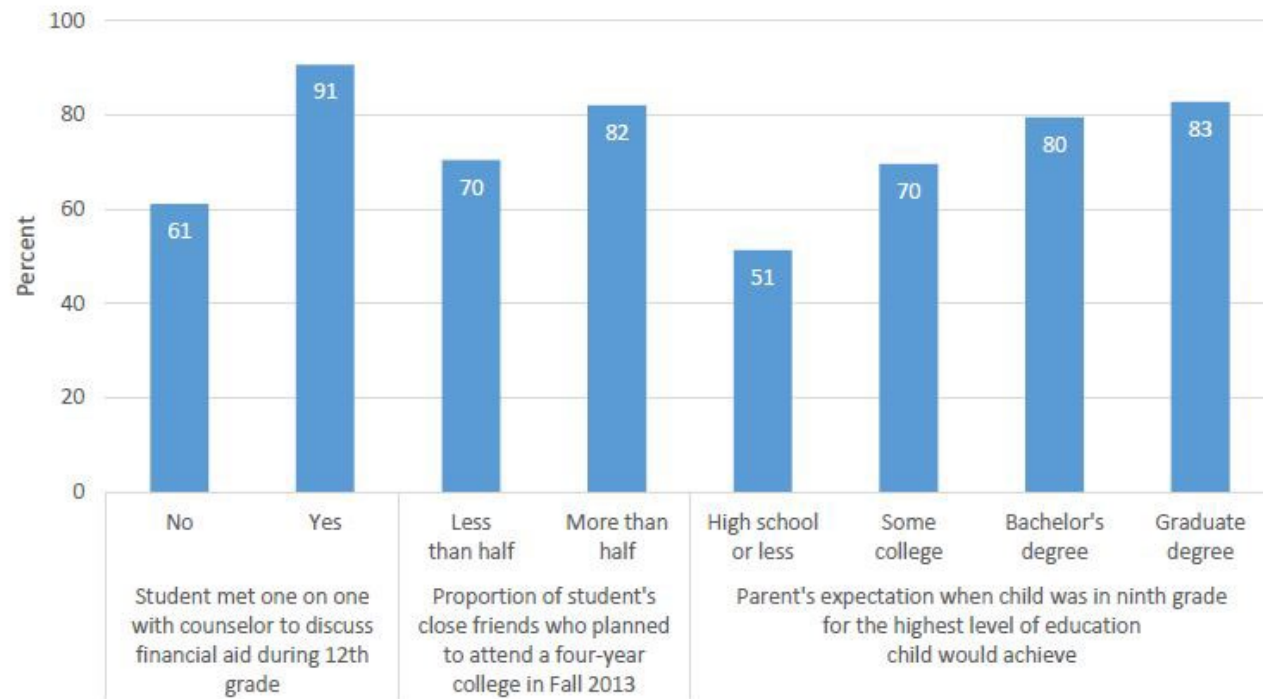
- Student met one-on-one with counselor to discuss financial aid during 12th grade
- Proportion of close friends who planned in 11th grade to attend a four-year college in Fall 2013
- Parents' expectations when child was in 9th grade for the child's highest level of education

Student Characteristics

- Mathematics exam score
- Parents' highest degree attained
- In 9th grade, student planned to enroll in Associate's or Bachelor's degree program after high school
- Race
- Sex

*Notably, no counseling characteristics were significant.

Percent of Students Who Submitted FAFSA by Fall 2013, by Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence



Notes: Estimates are weighted by W3W1W2STU, and the rounded sample size was 10,900 -13,300 observations for all analyses except whether a parent met with a counselor by 11th grade, which had a rounded sample size of 5,100..

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Postsecondary Attendance in Fall 2013

NACAC

Logistic Regression Results: Postsecondary Attendance in 2013

The following had a significant effect on whether a student attended postsecondary education in 2013:

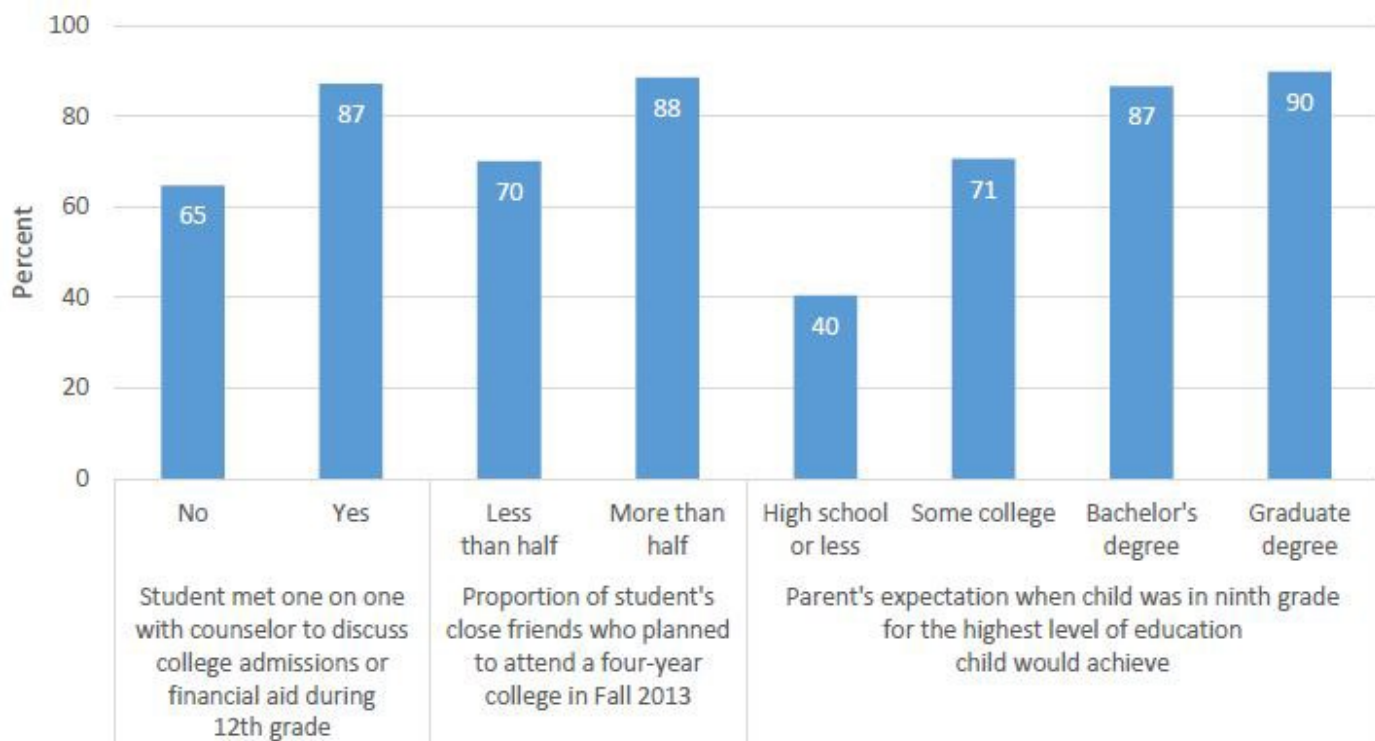
Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence

- Student met one-on-one with counselor to discuss financial aid during 12th grade
- Proportion of close friends who planned in 11th grade to attend a four-year college in Fall 2013
- Parents' expectations when child was in 9th grade for the child's highest level of education

Student Characteristics

- School type
- Mathematics exam score
- Parents' highest degree attained
- In 9th grade, student planned to enroll in Associate's or Bachelor's degree program after high school
- Race
- Sex

Percent of Students Who Attended Postsecondary Education in Fall 2013, by Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence



Notes: Estimates are weighted by W3W1W2STU, and the rounded sample size was 10,100 -12,400 observations for all analyses except whether a parent met with a counselor by 11th grade, which had a rounded sample size of 5,100..

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Bachelor's Degree Program Attendance in Fall 2013

Logistic Regression Results: Bachelor's Degree Program Attendance in Fall 2013

The following had a significant effect on whether a student enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program in 2013:

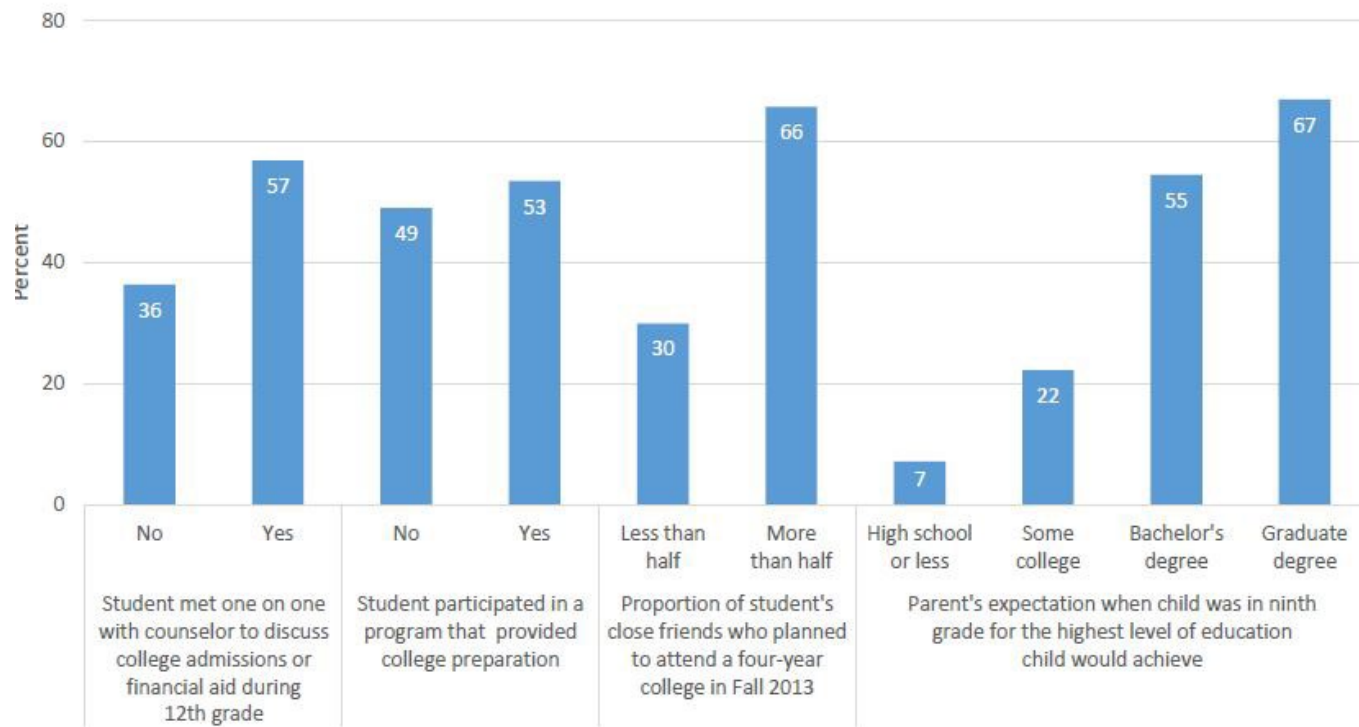
Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence

- Student met one-on-one with counselor to discuss financial aid during 12th grade
- Participated in a college prep program by 11th grade
- Proportion of close friends who planned in 11th grade to attend a four-year college in Fall 2013
- Parents' expectations when child was in 9th grade for the child's highest level of education

Student Characteristics

- School type
- Mathematics exam score
- Parents' highest degree attained
- In 9th grade, student planned to enroll in Associate's or Bachelor's degree program after high school
- Race

Percent of Students Who Attended a Bachelor's Degree Program in Fall 2013, by Student Characteristics Counselors May Influence



Notes: Estimates are weighted by W3W1W2STU, and the rounded sample size was 10,100 -12,400 observations for all analyses except whether a parent met with a counselor by 11th grade, which had a rounded sample size of 5,100..

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), Base Year, 2009-10; First Follow-up, 2011-12; and 2013 Update. Restricted Use File.

Key Findings

1. Several characteristics of the counseling programs in students' schools were related to whether students met one on one with a high school counselor to discuss college admissions or financial aid.
2. Whether a student met one on one with a high school counselor to discuss college admissions or financial aid was related to the student's likelihood of completing a FAFSA, attending postsecondary education, and attending a bachelor's degree program.
3. Student characteristics that counselors may be able to influence were also related to students' postsecondary outcomes, including:
 - whether a student participated in a program that provided college preparation
 - the proportion of the student's close friends planning to attend a four-year college
 - parents' expectations in ninth grade for their child's highest postsecondary degree attainment,
 - whether the student spoke with a counselor in ninth grade about going to college,
 - whether parents spoke with a counselor about their child's options for life after high school by 11th grade.

Notable Numbers

- Students who met with a counselor to discuss financial aid were 6.8 times more likely to submit a FAFSA than those of students who did not meet with a counselor.
- Students who reported that a majority of their friends planned to attend a four-year college had 75% higher odds of attending college than those who reported fewer friends planned to attend a four-year college.
- Students who met with a counselor to discuss college admissions or financial aid had odds of pursuing a bachelor's degree program that were twice as high as those of students who did not meet with a counselor to discuss these topics.