



ISCA *Insight*

The Newsletter of the Illinois School Counselor Association
a state chapter of the American School Counselor Association

Spring 2011 Issue

www.ilschoolcounselor.org

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The mission of the Illinois School Counselor Association (ISCA) is to provide leadership, advocacy, and collaboration for Illinois school counselors, which results in systemic change to enhance the success of all students in their academic, career, and social/emotional development.

ISCA: Day on the Hill 2011



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a division of



Venisa Beasley-Green, Ed.D.



Calendar of Events

APRIL 2011

- 4/1/2011 Counseling Awareness Month
 4/8-11/2011 NOSCA Conference
 4/24/2011 Easter
 4/27/2011 PSAE dates
 4/29/2011 ISCA Annual Conference
 Springfield
 4/29/2011 ISCA Board Meeting 4pm -
 Springfield U of I - PAC Building

MAY 2011

- 5/2/2011 AP Exams
 5/4/2011 IACAC Annual Conference
 5/8/2011 Mother's Day
 5/30/2011 Memorial Day

JUNE 2011

- 6/4/2011 ISCA Board Meeting
 6/19/2011 Father's Day
 6/23/2011 ASCA Delegate Assembly-Seattle
 6/25/2011 ASCA Conference

JULY 2011

- 7/9/2011 ISCA Board Transition Meeting-
 Oak Brook Renaissance 2 pm

FEBRUARY 2012

- 2/6-10/2012 National School Counseling Week

APRIL 2012

- 4/13/2012 ISCA Annual Conference -
 Downstate
 4/20/2012 ISCA Annual Conference -
 Chicagoland Area

Featured Authors Wanted for ISCA Newsletter

Questions / Submissions
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National School Counselor Week

from Laurie Siegel
President Elect



Reflections on the February 2011 conference.... The importance of professional development and continuing education can't be overemphasized, especially in a field as vital as counseling. Only by continually arming ourselves with the latest research, techniques and knowledge in the profession can we hope to stay effective in our daily activities.

Not only was this conference a chance to learn, but a chance to get acquainted with others that share that same vision, of wanting to better oneself. So, **congratulations** to all of you for braving the blizzard, and continuing your journey of lifelong learning.

As I reflect on our keynote speaker, Trish Hatch, and her wonderful presentation on creating positive changes, I am reminded of my own professional responsibilities and some self-checking that I have begun doing and would like to share with you.

Exerts from 10 steps to sustain your ASCA National Model program (Rachel Perusse, Mark Kuranz):

Realize that beliefs matter.

Self-check:

- Do you believe all students can achieve to high standards?
- What school practices demonstrate the belief that all students can achieve to high standards?
- Are you providing resources for all students to be successful?
- How can you prioritize and manage your time to improve school success?
- What are the outcomes for you, your stakeholders, in understanding that belief matters?

Shift from a focus on the school counselor to a focus on the school counseling program.

Self-check:

- How do you get input on a regular basis about student needs?
- What strategies are in place to receive feedback about students' needs in the academic, career and personal/social domains?
- How will your work be different when there is a shift from a focus on the school counselor to a focus on the school counseling program? What skills, attitudes and behaviors are necessary to do this?

Take a leadership role to implement the ASCA National Model.

Self-check:

- What aspects of your school counseling program demonstrate that you are a leader?
- Is there a written school counseling program in place?
- What behaviors do stakeholders expect from you a leader?

Do not work in isolation; collaborate and enlist the support of the building administrator and school faculty.

Self-check

- Is there an advisory council? How strong is the commitment to creating the advisory council?
- How do principals, central office administrators and others learn about your effective school counseling program?
- How do you present and share school counseling outcome data (e.g., process, content, perception and results data) with the school staff?

Collect, analyze, interpret, share and present data.

Self Check:

- What do you evaluate and how often? Who you inform or share with about your results?
- How do you evaluate success of the guidance curriculum, individual planning and responsive services?

Use advocacy skills.

Self-check:

- What counseling skills do you have that support the shift to a school counseling program focus?
- What counseling skills do you need to learn to support the shift to a school counseling program focus?

From Presentation to Legislation: The Importance of Developing Professional Identity

Erin Mason, Ph.D.
President Elect Elect

As a Counselor Educator, and former School Counselor, I believe wholeheartedly that one of my primary roles is to help shape the identity of those entering the profession. And while textbooks and traditional graduate course assignments can indeed aid in this process, there is no substitute for experiential learning out in the field. Whether you are a novice or veteran, there are two such experiences that I've come to find are instrumental in taking professional identity to new levels, presenting at a conference and lobbying the legislature. **"Congratulations! Your proposal has been accepted!"**

Students in my section of practicum and internship are "highly encouraged" to submit an ISCA conference presentation each year. This is not on the syllabus as a required assignment, though it is all but expected, [insert students muttering here]. Other students, even those not concurrently in my courses, have also been "encouraged" to submit presentations to conferences as well. We've been fortunate to have such presentations accepted in the last few years and presenting always sparks a kind of knowledge that just cannot be acquired in a campus classroom.

From proposing, to preparing, to presenting, to processing after the session; all of these are skills that create a school counselor who contributes to the collegiate and intellectual capital of the profession. Getting involved in the larger circles of school counseling is essential to the sharing and generating of ideas, and to the maintenance of the passion that draws each of us to work that we do in schools. I hold fast to the belief that it is the school counselor practitioners, not the counselor educators, who should be doing the majority of presentations at conferences. Current wisdom and relevant practices from the field are like gold; always, always the most valuable.

"It's not nearly as scary as I thought!"

For the second time, DePaul was able to send 24 students and faculty to Springfield this year to join ISCA and IACAC in their Day on the Hill. Timing of the event is never easy because of the schedule and "vibe" of the general assembly, as well as the various school spring breaks, test administrations and districts' reluctance to allow staff out of the building. It's a gamble, but so far, both times, we've hit the jackpot!

After taking multiple groups to the state capitol to lobby the legislature, both in Illinois and in my home state of Georgia, I consistently hear this exclamation. Much like the conference presentation, participants are filled with

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Executive Director Notes

I am pleased to see so many potential laws being discussed in Washington that would positively impact school counselors. Our Annual Day on the Hill was a great success and Amy Thompson, the ISCA Legislative Chairperson, did a wonderful job of organizing the event. Look for an announcement of the 2012 date for Day on the Hill; it will likely again be in February or March.



Daniel Stasi

The Springfield conference is only days away and will have a great selection of workshops.

After a lot of hard work the ISCA bylaws have been revised. They are posted on our website. The changes should enable ISCA to conduct board meetings and make decisions with greater ease. ISCA elections are occurring now. ISCA has great choices for its leadership roles. I am sure whatever candidates are elected will do a great job of leading ISCA in the future years, but they will need your help. Please volunteer at the annual conferences or at other events.

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www.linkedin.com

CICO Report

CICO held a very successful meeting of counselor educators on March 4, 2011. Over 70 educators were in attendance. A primary agenda item was the issue of should Illinois require a 60 credit hour degree instead of the current 48 hour degree for licensure. Approximately 26 states currently require 60 credit hours. The result was probably more questions than answers.

Will the extra 12 credit hours make someone a better counselor? Is the cost of the extra credit hours to the student justified? Will salary levels of future earning justify the costs of a 60 credit hour degree in counseling? Should new specific classes be required? Will a 60 credit hour requirement make Illinois graduates, degrees more portable?

ICES has volunteered to survey Illinois Counselor Education programs and gather more needed information.

It was interesting to note that several programs CACREP and non-CACREP already offer a program in excess of 48 hours with several offering a 60 credit hour program. The next step is to get good answers to the many questions raised.

IDFPR has established a new policy of requiring that all Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) formed by licensed health care and other professionals will now be required to register with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Division of Professional Regulation (IDFPR). Applications for registration of limited liability companies are now available. The application packets contain detailed instructions and other information which can be viewed and printed at www.idfpr.com. The initial registration fee is \$50 and the annual renewal fee is \$40. Applications are required to be submitted by existing limited liability companies as well as new entities just forming with the Illinois Secretary of State. All LLCs are expected to be licensed within 90 days, and the department will begin enforcement for failure to be licensed on that date.

Illinois Legislation

HB 1524 We have proposed new legislation that will allow LCPCs to be examiners for involuntary admissions. Dan Stasi, our lobbyist, testified in Springfield on this legislation. It has passed the House unanimously and is now in the Senate.

HB1193 Amends the Illinois Insurance Code. Provides that no recoupment or offset may be requested or withheld from



Daniel Stasi, CICO Executive Director and lobbyist.

student or former student who has acted in a mentally erratic or violent nature while enrolled. Provides that the Department of State Police may use such information to determine whether to deny an application for or to revoke and seize the student or former student's Firearm Owner's Identification Card. In House awaiting a vote.

HR 26 Expresses support for improved suicide awareness in the State of Illinois in order to educate citizens about mental illness and other disorders that can lead to suicide and successful diagnoses and treatment of the underlying causes of suicide, thereby increasing the numbers of survivors. Adopted in the House.

Illinois Budget Cuts

We continue to monitor what is happening with the Illinois Human Services Budget. Through our emails to members we are keeping you updated as new changes in the budget come out frequently. Originally severe cuts were announced for Human Services. Through the efforts of everyone in the mental health field many of those cuts were significantly reduced.

BC/BS

We are also keeping a watchful eye on changes to policies with BC/BS and other insurance/HMO/PPO, etc.

We were pleased that again through everyone's efforts BC/BS rescinded their earlier policy decision and established policies consistent with the Mental Health Parity Act. We will continue to keep our members updated on changes through our blast email notifications to our members.

Federal Legislation

Legislation has been introduced in the United States Senate to establish Medicare coverage of licensed professional counselors. On Thursday, March 17, 2011, Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and John Barrasso (R-WY) introduced S.604, the Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act. The legislation would also establish coverage of licensed marriage and family therapists. AMHCA and ACA worked closely with Senators Wyden and Barrasso in the development and preparation of this critically important bipartisan measure.

WE NEED COSPONSORS!

Mental health counselors are strongly encouraged to call, write, or e-mail their U.S. Senators to ask them to cosponsor S.604. Senator Durbin is already a co-sponsor. Contact Senator Kirk to co-sponsor. The more co-sponsors we have for the Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act, the more likely we are to gain its inclusion in larger Medicare legislation approved by Congress.

Call Sen. Kirk at: 202-224-2854. .

Once connected, ask to speak with the health legislative assistant.

Ask that Sen. Kirk co-sponsor S.604.

E-mail Sen Kirk http://kirk.senate.gov/contact_form.cfm send an e-mail urging co-sponsorship of S.604.

Current Issues in Legislation

Members of Congress have introduced several important pieces of legislation that would support credentialed school counselors. Lawmakers are working to get their bills' language inserted into the revised, or reauthorized, version of the main federal law on K-12 education, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind or ESEA). Congress is expected to take up ESEA reauthorization in 2011. To help ensure ESEA reauthorization includes a stronger investment in and support for credentialed school counselors, ACA encourages counselors to ask their lawmakers to cosponsor the following bills:

H.R. 5671, *Put School Counselors Where They're Needed Act*

- Sponsor: Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA-39)
- Cosponsors (as of September 15, 2010): 16
- Introduced: July 1, 2010

The Put School Counselors Where They're Needed Act would create a small demonstration project to fund additional secondary school counselors in at least 10 troubled, low-income high schools to help reduce dropout rates.

H.R. 1361 / S. 538, *Increased Student Achievement through Increased Student Support Act*

- Sponsors: Rep. Edolphus Towns (D-NY-10); Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-AR)
- Cosponsors (as of September 15, 2010): 50 in the House, both Democrats and Republicans (referred to as "bipartisan"); 14 in the Senate, also bipartisan
- Introduced: March 5, 2009

The Increased Student Achievement through Increased Student Support Act would increase the number and availability of school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists in qualified urban and rural low-income districts by authorizing the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to award five-year competitive grants to eligible partnerships between universities and school districts. The grants

would help provide a pipeline of trained school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists for high-need rural and urban schools. As an incentive to encourage such work, graduate students participating in the grant program would receive tuition credits and loan forgiveness.

H.R. 2597, *Positive Behavior for Safe and Effective Schools Act*

- Sponsor: Rep. Phil Hare (D-IL-17)
- Cosponsors (as of September 15, 2010): 37, bipartisan
- Introduced: May 21, 2009

The Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act would allow states to use ESEA Title I funds for school-wide, coordinated, early intervention services, such as positive behavior interventions and supports for all students in a school. Such services create a school climate that is highly conducive to learning, reduces discipline referrals, and improves academic outcomes. The bill would establish an Office of Specialized Instructional Support Services within ED, to administer and coordinate school support services, such as counseling. The legislation would also clarify conflicting terminology, definitions and roles of "specialized instructional support personnel," which includes school counselors.

H.R. 3800, *Reducing Barriers to Learning Act*

- Sponsor: Rep. David Loebsack (D-IA-2)
- Cosponsors (as of September 15, 2010): 14
- Introduced: October 13, 2009

The Reducing Barriers to Learning Act would also establish an Office of Specialized Instructional Support within ED, and authorize grants to state education departments to develop support programs and personnel dedicated to helping all students achieve. This bill would also clarify conflicting terminology, definitions and roles of "specialized instructional support personnel," such as school counselors.

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Erin Mason, Ph.D. President Elect Elect

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excitement and anxiety. Nothing is quite as energizing as watching students and professionals work together to pull legislators of the floor or hearing them recount every detail of their one-on-one meeting with a legislator in their office. The immersion of the event and the energy of the capitol are electrifying; there is truly nothing like it. After a day of training, lobbying

and sharing of experiences, it is clear that participants are empowered with new knowledge and that the process has been demystified. Lobbying for education related issues generates an authentic sense of the influence of the constituent, and of the necessary advocacy within our professional roles.

I extend my thanks to the leadership of ISCA and to the talented cadre of school counseling professionals in Illinois for making the profession one which my students are eager and excited to join.

Current Issues in Legislation

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H.R. 4122, *Graduation for All Act*

- Sponsor: Rep. George Miller (D-CA-7)
- Cosponsors (as of September 15, 2010): 11
- Introduced: November 19, 2009

The Graduation for All Act would provide competitive grants to school districts to help the lowest-performing middle and high schools improve student achievement, graduation rates, college enrollment and career readiness. Grants would support rigorous curricula, data systems to identify and assist at-risk students, and academic and social support services such as counseling. This bill also adopts "specialized instructional support personnel," such as school counselors, and their services to clarify the current conflicting terminology, definitions and roles for these professionals and services.

S. 3733, *Achievement through Prevention Act*

- Sponsor: Sen. Michael Bennett (D-CO)
- Cosponsors (as of September 15, 2010): 3, bipartisan
- Introduced: August 5, 2010

The Achievement through Prevention Act would improve coordination between special educators and general

educators by aligning the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and ESEA. The bill would also increase the use of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and early warning and intervening services (EIS). The legislation would also extend PBIS and EIS, with technical assistance, to at-risk youth and to educational services and institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth. In these ways, the bill would help improve student academic achievement, reduce the incidence of wrongly referring "difficult" students to special-education, and reduce disciplinary problems in schools.



from Laurie Siegel President Elect

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Understand the change process and how to deal with resistance to change.

Self-check

- What are the school stakeholders' emotional and cognitive resistances to implementing a school counseling program?
- What are the predictable barriers to school counseling program implementation?

Work not only to change individuals, but also work to change the system.

Self-check

- What evidence, including data, might be used to change your non-school counseling duties?
- What data would the principal need to allow you systematic access to students?

Use technology effectively.

Self-check

- What skills do you need to use a data spread sheet (such as Excel or EZAnalyze) to organize program data?
- What can you do with CounselingSurveys.org or SurveyMonkey.com?
- How can you use e-mail, spreadsheets, word, career Websites, Internet sites, etc. to improve your efficiency and effectiveness?

Accept that implementation takes time; it probably will not happen in a month or in a year.

Self-check:

- How can you connect to other school counselors who are implementing a comprehensive school counseling program?
- How might the recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) recognition process help you understand the amount of time required for program implementation?
- Have you assessed your district's readiness to implement a program based on the ASCA National

On the Web

www.ilga.gov
www.thomas.gov
www.IBRinfo.org

Illinois legislation

Federal legislation

A new website that provides independent, reliable information about Income-Based Repayment and Public Service Loan Forgiveness, two new federal programs to help make student loan repayment fair and manageable.

http://

New Videos on SchoolTube

Check out the new videos on ASCA's SchoolTube channel:

- How School Counselors Contribute to School Success
- What Does a School Counselor Do?
- Parents and School Counselors -- Partners for Student Success
- Life After High School: How School Counselors Help Students with Career and College Planning
- Bullying in Schools
- Cyberbullying in Schools

Feel free to use these videos for school board meetings, back-to-school night, career day and more.

For Immediate Release - March 21, 2011

27 Illinois School Districts recognized by College Board for increased participation on AP exams

More Illinois students taking rigorous, advanced courses

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois State Board of Education joins the College Board in recognizing 27 Illinois School districts with making the AP Achievement List. The districts singled out for this honor either maintained or improved their participation and performance on the rigorous AP exams used toward college credit and placement. City of Chicago School District 299, the largest district in the state, also ranked as the largest district award winner.

“As we move to implement more rigorous learning standards in Illinois, this is a particularly important achievement for these 27 districts,” said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. “Many of these districts are not only providing more students with advanced academic courses but showing improved scores. Whether students are honing skills in science, math, a foreign language, history or other subject, they’re pushing themselves beyond high school level work that will better prepare them for success in college and careers.”

Overall, a record number of Illinois students are taking and passing AP exams, according to the sixth annual AP Report to the Nation. Illinois ranks in the upper half of the nation (18th) for the number of high school seniors who scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam.

Improvement in AP results typically requires sustained effort. The AP Achievement List is based on examination of three years of AP data, 2008 through 2010, from all students who took AP Examinations in May of those years. Districts must have met the following criteria to receive the award:

1. Increased access to AP by
 - a. At least 4 percent in large districts
 - b. At least 7 percent in medium districts
 - c. At least 11 percent in small districts
2. The percentage of exams taken by African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students must not be decreasing.
3. Performance levels must be maintained or improved when comparing the percentage of exams scoring 3+ in 2010 to 2008.

While the AP Achievement List is not a roster of higher performing districts, it is a roster of districts that are simultaneously expanding opportunity and improving performance, so even low performing districts are included if they have been able to maintain or improve scores while expanding access. However, no district with less than 10 percent of AP Exams scoring 3 or better is included.

While performance levels must be maintained or improved among traditionally underserved minority students in order to qualify for the AP Achievement List, this criterion is waived for districts with less than five percent minority students so as to avoid penalizing small, rural districts that do not have significant racial/ethnic diversity within their high school populations.

The Illinois schools on the AP Achievement List for maintaining or improving participation and performance are:

- Antioch Community High School District 117
- Central Community Unit School District 301
- Chicago Public Schools District 299
- Diocese of Joliet Education Office
- Edwardsville Community Unit School District 7
- Elmhurst Community Unit School District 205
- Elmwood Park Community Unit School District 401
- Galesburg Community Unit School District 205
- Grayslake High School District 127
- Indian Prairie Community Unit School District 204
- Joliet Township High School District 204
- Lake Forest High School District 115
- Lake Park Community High School District 108
- Lincoln Way Community High School District 210
- Maine Township High School District 207
- Oswego Community Unit School District 308
- Ridgewood High School District 234
- Community Unit School District 300
- St. Charles Community Unit School District 303
- Thornton Township High School District 205
- Township High School District 211
- Township High School District 214
- Triad Community School District 2
- Urbana School District 116
- Warren Township High School District 121
- Wauconda Community School District 118
- Zion Benton Township High School District 126

“Fewer teacher candidates pass basic skills test!”

Lorraine Forte (March, 2011)

That headline topped Catalyst Chicago’s story on the impact of an Illinois State Board of Education decision to raise passing scores on the test that college students must take to earn admission to a school of education. The board’s move was part of a strategy to raise the rigor of teacher preparation in Illinois and, in turn, improve the quality of the teaching force.

In September, the first round of testing took place under the new standard—and pass rates plummeted to 22 percent overall. The racial disparity was even more shocking. Scores hit rock-bottom for African-American and Latino students, at 3 percent and 7 percent respectively. The news stunned state officials, as well as community groups whose education agenda included bringing more minority teachers into schools.

Hours after we posted the story on our website—on a weekend, no less—the comments began to fly.

Some readers called the basic skills test a waste of time, with no proven correlation to teaching ability. Other readers wrote that aspiring teachers ought to be able to demonstrate mastery of high-school level reading, language arts and math. “If we, as teachers, want to be considered professionals, we need to show that we know our subject matter,” one reader wrote.

Since September, pass rates have barely risen. Students can re-take those sections of the test that they failed up to five times.

Frankly, it’s shocking to see such abysmal performance, among college students, on an 11th-grade level test. I took the practice version, available online, and found it to be a fair measure of basic academic content that any college student should have already.

It’s especially disturbing to see prospective black and Latino teachers score so poorly, since minority teachers are so scarce in the classroom. The racial gap is just one more sign of the disparity in school spending in Illinois. African-American and Latino students typically attend inferior, underfunded high schools and are still “catching up” once they get to college. They simply have not been prepared to pass an 11th-grade test.

Even so, the state board was right to raise the passing scores last year. Good test scores are not a direct indicator of future success as a teacher. But there is an indirect correlation, one pointed out by Deputy Editor Sarah Karp. “Don’t we want teachers to be role models?” asks Karp, whose three sons attend Chicago Public Schools.

Yes, we do. And as such, teachers must have a commitment to learning—for themselves as well as for their students.

There’s a lot of talk in education circles about getting “the best and brightest” college students to choose teaching

as a career. A recent report that generated coverage in the education press explained how Singapore, Finland and South Korea use financial incentives and rigorous screening to recruit teachers from the ranks of top students.

Singapore offers paid tuition and a salary to prospective teachers who pledge to stay in schools for three to six years and offers three tracks for advancement to keep teachers in the field. In Finland, teachers must have a master’s degree, but the government pays for all graduate-level courses and gives teachers broad decision-making power in schools.

These countries are far smaller and less diverse than the U.S., but some of the practices might well attract more talented young people, especially minorities, into teaching—for instance, additional programs for loan forgiveness or paid tuition in exchange for working in urban schools.

But there are two dangers in focusing too much on recruiting smart students as teachers: One is the possibility of bypassing candidates who have the skill to connect with children and communities but less-than-stellar academic credentials. It’s harder to teach the former than the latter, and the ability to relate to students and parents is particularly critical for teachers in low-income urban schools. This issue of Catalyst In Depth reports on efforts by Illinois schools of education to teach this “cultural competence.”

The second danger is in turning a blind eye to larger policy issues. Research has shown that teachers are the most important in-school factor affecting student achievement. Yet, instruction and curriculum are only one of five essential supports for learning and school improvement, as the Consortium on Chicago School Research has noted. No matter how smart and dedicated, teachers can’t do it alone.

At a November 2010 conference, Richard Rothstein of the Economic Policy Institute noted that the economic recession has had a deep impact on the home lives of children and families. “Efforts to improve schools are undermined by the deteriorating conditions under which kids come to school,” Rothstein told the audience.

Here in Illinois, child poverty is on the rise and puts more children at risk of school failure, according to Voices for Illinois Children, which publishes an annual report on children’s well-being.

Education policymakers should take heed. Ignoring the realities of children’s lives, such as unemployed parents and inadequate health care, only perpetuates the inequity that impacts whether children can learn.

RTI Planning

Heather Cody, PSC, LPC

After I graduated from St. Xavier University with my Master's in Counseling and my Type 73, I was under the impression that I had already learned all of my shapes and colors. Boy was I wrong. Entering the world of public education, I quickly learned we would be learning a lot about triangles. Before we start our careers, the expectation is to know about RTI triangles and PBIS triangles, intervention triangles, and all of them have the same color scheme; green on the bottom, yellow in the middle and red on top.

Preparing for my initial interviews, I was more than prepared to answer the standard questions of "why do you want to be a school counselor?" and "what are the most significant social/emotional challenges that students face?" and "which level of Maslow's Hierarchy would be explored if a student was in a transition from being homeless to living in an apartment?" Well, most of my interviews did include these questions; two out of the three anyway. But then I kept getting questions about RTI and what I envisioned my role as the school counselor to be in implementing RTI. I stumbled my way through my first interview, called another graduate from my class and asked her if she had ever heard of RTI. She had not, so I called a friend of mine that graduated from another university and neither had she. Luckily, I was able to find a teacher who was able to explain the triangle of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS).

School counseling programs include a lot of different information in their graduate programs. We spend over two years of our lives learning how to be an effective counselor. With all of this knowledge and hard work, how are we unprepared for what turned out to be a major part of our jobs? I've done the numbers and I personally spend about 40% of my days working on either RTI or PBIS issues.

With every Illinois Public School being expected to have an RTI Plan in place by the start of the 2010 school year, we have to learn quickly! I encourage universities to add more information related to RTI. I have been lucky enough to be a guest speaker at a graduate level class at Governor's State University under the direction of Dr. Yang concerning these very topics. The feedback I received from the students was very positive. I had multiple students approach me and express how much they wish they had known this information before their practicum hours began. Since then, I have worked with interns and practicum students who are in the school setting that feel they are unprepared for this aspect of our careers.

With all that being said, I thought I would give a brief, candid description of the concepts of RTI and PBIS in the hopes that we as professionals can be proactive and prepared for the educational changes in Illinois.

RTI is about data-driven decision making that requires benchmark testing and progress monitoring for specific focuses on Math, Reading, and Social/Emotional/

Behavioral Development. PBIS is a support system that can fulfill the behavioral component of RTI. A goal of RTI is to make sure us as educators have done everything we can before testing for an IEP.

RTI's Triangle starts with a green base which is called Tier 1. This includes interventions that all students receive – Universal Interventions. Here you see things like researched curriculum, core instruction, and school-wide behavioral expectations. This part of the triangle should be sufficient enough to help 80% of the student population. The yellow part of the triangle, Tier 2, is the small specialized group interventions. Approximately 15% of your students would need extra interventions like these. The red section, Tier 3, is intensive individual interventions.

So how do we know which students go where? That is where the world of data takes over. Every student is screened using different systems. Of course grades, test scores, ISAT scores, office discipline referrals, teacher feedback and all of the other information we are able to gather is relevant; however, with RTI, we want even more objective data-driven tools. There are not a whole lot out there so I'll mention some of the major ones I have either heard of or worked with and I suggest you do your research. Educational screeners include MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), DIBELS Data System, Easy CBM, and AIMSweb. Each of these programs has their pros and cons but as we all know, cost is one of the most deciding factors. Universal screeners used for Social and Emotional Issues are next to impossible to find. In fact, I have only heard of one-Besstweb.

Students that are identified to need extra assistance are then placed in specialized groups according to need. Some of the screeners include curriculum and other programs I have used for academic interventions include FCRR (Florida Center for Reading Research), Reading Plus, Reading Partners, ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) and Symphony Math to name a few. Social and Emotional Research Based Interventions are a bit tougher to find. I have used the Why Try Program, PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies), Social Skills Training, and Check & Connect.

Our roles as school counselors can be expected to include gathering and organizing the Tier 1-3 data, providing coaching with teachers for data interpretations, facilitating regular data meetings for building and grade levels, research on different academic and behavioral interventions, organizing and implementing new problem solving processes, administering the benchmark and progress monitoring tests and more. I have even run small group interventions for reading!

I am not saying that having RTI and PBIS be such a huge part of our roles as school counselors is ideal or even right in the sense that it takes us away from working with the students. However, it is becoming more and more of a reality and we need to be ahead of the game with our information.

Heather Cody, PSC, LPC
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ISCA: Day on the Hill 2011

*Sarah Fortier,
Graduate Student,
Governor's State
University*

This Reflection is of my experience with the Day on the Hill event with the Illinois School Counseling Association on March 3rd, 2011. The purpose of this event was to advocate for school counselors by meeting with legislators and Senators about the importance of counselors in the school environment. Each attendee was given packets of information to pass on to legislators that contained statistics of student to school counselor ratios by state, research on the effectiveness of school counselors, the role of school counselors, and the impact of school counselors on college and career readiness in high school students.

I admit that while driving down to Springfield, I was apprehensive about what to expect. I do not normally put myself into situations in which I don't know many people or much about the event. I soon put those feelings aside, mostly because of the enthusiasm of my two colleagues joining me for this experience, as well as the warm welcome by ISCA and DePaul University staff and students. Instructions were then given on what to expect at the Capitol and how to meet the legislators. I expected to feel relief and clarification after this, but I was very baffled. I was expecting scheduled appointments and knowledge from the legislators that we would be there. Instead, we were informed on how to fill out a

note to pass to a runner who would give it to the legislator. The legislator would decide if it was worthwhile to meet us. We were also given the option of finding his or her office and trying to meet with them there. I was a bit appalled at the idea of bothering someone when I wasn't scheduled or expected for them. However, two people reenacted a typical meeting with a legislator who had come out of the House, and that was very helpful.

We had a little time at the Capitol to become familiar with the layout and we got a chance to talk to a few DePaul students who had been to the event last year. I was still shocked by the idea of confronting someone, but one of my fellow students was able to look up the legislators in our area, what they looked like, and even their office numbers in the Capitol from her Blackberry. That is how we found Legislator Acevedo. We stopped outside his office, each of us very nervous to go in and ask for him. As I was debating about going in, he came out and it prompted me to stop him. My hand was shaking and he wasn't very interested in stopping, but I quickly explained why we were there and the information in the packet. I thanked him for his time and he walked away without a word. But I was very happy that I did it. I felt like I accomplished a small fight for school counselors.

We also had the chance to meet with Senator Emil Jones III, thanks to a classmate. This was an amazing meeting. He was happy to sit down with us and we had a natural conversation without a lot of law jargon. Senator Jones

is very supportive of education, but also very conscious of how money must be spent. I told him, as was suggested by ISCA members, that we were not down there to specifically support or fight with a piece of legislation. We just wanted them to be aware of the importance of school counselors and explain why school counselors are so important to our school systems. He seemed grateful for the packet of information. Senator Jones also took us on the Senate floor and explained how things worked. He also showed us President Obama's old seat, which one of my colleagues was so excited about. Needless to say, he won us over and we will all remember his generosity and kindness.

This event was full of surprises and anxieties, but I know it was worth the worry and much more important to me than a simple event. This day enhanced my confidence for this career and my professionalism. I was very proud of how I handled the unsure moments and felt almost like a leader, which I am usually not. I know my passion for this field was clear to others and it was also a reminder to me of how much I love school counseling. I couldn't be happier with the outcome of today and I am excited to share my knowledge and enthusiasm with my fellow students.

Day on the Hill

*Kelly Doering,
Graduate Student,
DePaul University*

On March 3, 2011, I had the opportunity to participate in my second trip to Springfield, Illinois, in support of ISCA Day on the Hill. As a school counseling graduate student from DePaul University, I try to immerse myself in professional development and advocacy opportunities whenever possible. I believe taking the time to advocate for the profession of school counseling helps us to have a greater appreciation for the field. It solidifies our beliefs and allows us the opportunity to tell someone at the state level why our profession means so much.

Meeting with Representative Sara Feigenholtz in Springfield was one of the most memorable experiences I have had as a school counseling

graduate student. We introduced ourselves as School Counseling graduate students from DePaul University and began to explain how the profession has come a long way. I told her school counselors have historically had the reputation of sitting in their offices drinking coffee all day, but that is no longer the case and that we are here as evidence that the profession has changed. Representative Feigenholtz was very personable and loved that we had traveled down to Springfield to meet with her. She asked us for our contact information and said she would love to stay in touch.

A few days after our meeting, I received an email from Representative Feigenholtz:

*"Dear Kelly:
It was wonderful to meet you in Springfield last week; thank you for taking the time to see me.*

I wish you the best of luck as you finish your degree at DePaul and know that so many of your future clients will

benefit from your hard work, dedication, and desire to make the world a better place. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of assistance to you."

I could not have asked for a better experience and will absolutely remain in contact with Representative Feigenholtz in the future. ISCA's Day on the Hill offers the invaluable opportunity to advocate for the profession of school counseling with your fellow school counselors. Based on my personal experience, I have gained so much more than I ever thought possible and would highly encourage participation in advocacy opportunities in the future.



(From left): Brea Adams, Graduate Student, DePaul University - Illinois House Rep. Sara Feigenholtz - Kelly Doering, Graduate Student, DePaul University

ISCA Conference

Julie Crowe-McCarthy

As a professional school counselor-in-training, I am often faced with the task of trying to picture my ideal setting – how I will set up my office, what I will do to get students in the door, and how I will work with other stakeholders to ensure that I am helping students. Being in an internship has started to bring some of these answers to light as I see real life school scenarios play out before my eyes every day. I am grateful for this year-long opportunity, but I also understand that no two schools are alike and the experience I am getting could be vastly different than the school where I (hopefully) will land a job. This unsettling and exciting reality has made me appreciate the professional development opportunities presented for school counselors. Namely, I learned a great deal from attending the Illinois School Counselor Association's Annual Conference in Chicago this past February.

I should confess that going to the ISCA conference was not something that I decided to do on my own. It was a two-day affair (with the pre-conference) and required that I take time from my internship and paying job to attend and I just wasn't sure it was worth it. My DePaul supervisor and ISCA president elect elect, Dr. Erin Mason, encouraged our entire group of interns to present at the conference and

suddenly I was not only attending the conference but preparing, with my group, a presentation on my own work in schools – a far cry from complaining about taking a day off of work.

I attended the pre-conference with Dr. Trish Hatch and was inspired by her energy and insight. I left Thursday feeling like I had new tools to begin to address the needs of any given population. The second day started with another fabulous keynote by Dr. Hatch and breakout sessions on various topics which were helpful and relevant. What was really wonderful, though, were the discussions that I was able to be a part of on subjects ranging from supervision to RTI to financial aid. Finally, I was able to see what I share in common with other counselors and how we differ. I was able to gain insight on issues that my student population might not face but that are pressing in many other districts. For me, this was exactly what I needed in the middle of a school year that was quickly being devoured by paperwork, student crisis and office politics. The ISCA conference, along with the multitude of other opportunities to get together with school counselors, can often seem like more of a chore when considering the obligations of the average counselor, but they do so much to help our profession stay focused and inspired. Specifically, they offer a newbie like me an opportunity to reach out beyond my limited exposure to an amazing field of professionals. And that is something to be grateful for.

Day on the Hill

*Bridget Montgomery,
Graduate Student,
DePaul University*

On Thursday, March 3, 2011, members of the DePaul University counseling faculty (Dr. Mason, Dr. Whitney, Dr. Whitman and Dr. Ockerman) accompanied about 20 students from the counseling program on a trip to the state capitol in Springfield, Illinois. I had an interest in going because I wanted to witness bills being voted on, the lobbying process and to see my district's legislators' work in action.

On the bus ride down to Springfield, I thought about a lecture from my multicultural counseling class two days before. Specifically, I thought about the lecture on advocacy surrounding the hypothetical scenario of the young boy who suffered routine abuse from his alcoholic father. In the scenario, the boy's mother suffered physical violence from his father as well and had little means in leaving her husband. The boy threatened to run away from home to escape the abuse he received. The question raised in class was what the counselor should do for the boy. Some classmates thought that calling the Department of Children and Family Services was the right thing to do. Others thought that calling outside services was appropriate. Others still thought about passing the boy's case on to his school social worker. These answers seemed close, but seemed to miss the target. I thought approaching the father and asking him to seek counseling as the most effective way for the boy (and his mother) to stop the abuse. If his father got counseling, he could potentially recognize his abusive actions and his alcohol dependency. And yes, the boy should also continue to receive counseling as well.

As counselors-in-training, it was an important discussion to have. I

learned to understand that children are, most of the time, at the mercy of their parents/guardians. I gained awareness by learning to look at children as dependents without many rights independent of their parents. Further, we discussed that laws are put into place to protect children but that cases are often difficult to prove and prosecute; children are usually brought back to their homes regardless of the abuse that exists.

Next, I thought about the responsibility I had as a counselor to protect children and all of the ways in which counselors do protect children. I very much appreciated hearing that my job is to protect, advocate, teach, motivate, heal and understand children and the environment in which they live. On a municipal, state, and federal level, I must advocate for students/children (and also for the profession). In route to the state capitol, we were told we were going to advocate for salient issues that pertained to education, school counseling, or community counseling. In order to do so, we had to know if our elected officials were congressional or state representatives and the process of lobbying. While I knew who my representatives were, I had never lobbied before. It was very interesting to learn. A constituent can literally ask to see their congressional legislators if they are on the floor. The legislators come out and can have a conversation with their constituents, be it for 1 minute or 15. If the legislators are not on the floor, they may be in their offices. If so, offices are open throughout the capitol. Constituents are moving through many parts of the capitol looking for and talking with their legislators. It was interesting to see people walking all over the capitol building lobbying for the issues that are vital to them.

It was an interesting process to learn how lobbying and advocating is done at the state capitol. For those constituents from the Chicago area (it appeared that many in fact were from the Chicago area. Groups were wearing t-shirts with the names of their community groups and organizations on them, many of

which I identified), it begins with a 3 1/2 hour car journey into perhaps one of the most visually uninteresting parts of the state, but a journey it was. All the important issues that people are advocating for, makes the 3 1/2 hour journey was empowering to witness. At the capitol on the day we arrived, large groups of immigrants from all over the globe were there. There were many Hispanic constituents there as well to advocate for the Dream Act.

My legislators were not there at the time we were lobbying (or perhaps they were, but their secretaries said they were not), but we were able to leave school counseling information with them. While I also wanted to leave additional information on not continuing to cut mental health services in Illinois, I did not want to bombard the offices with too much information so I felt the information on supporting school counselors was sufficient for the time.

I have always visited my district's representatives at their offices in Chicago. It is definitely more convenient for me to do so. However, making the drive and being at the very place where bills are passed into law absolutely had more impact. It felt very official to make the trip down. And I was not alone, all my colleagues and professors were there for the same purpose as myself. I learned a great deal, hopefully making continued progress for the school counseling profession and made excellent contacts with my peers and legislators along the way.

Resources in social justice advocacy include:

Counselors for Social Justice
www.counselorsforsocialjustice.org

Teachers for Social Justice
www.teachersforjustice.org

Information on legislature, voting and more www.votesmart.org



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March 3, 2011

DePaul Graduate Program First in Illinois to be Recognized by National Leader in School Counseling Reform

DePaul University's graduate school counseling program is the first institution in Illinois and the 24th in the nation to affiliate with The Education Trust's National Center for Transformative School Counseling (NCTSC) Initiative, bringing national recognition to the program.

The distinction recognizes DePaul's school counseling program as a national leader in the school counseling profession, said Melissa Ockerman, assistant professor in the School of Education.

The Washington, D.C.-based organization promotes a new vision of school counseling in which school counselors advocate for educational equity, access to a rigorous college and career-readiness curricula, and academic success for all students. It aims to transform school counselors into powerful agents of change to help close the gaps in opportunity and achievement for low-income students and students of color.

"As the first institution in Illinois and one of only 24 nationwide to receive this honor, we are proud to be affiliated with The Education Trust's NCTSC," Ockerman said. "DePaul's school counseling program, in concert with its Vincentian mission, is a natural fit with NCTSC's underlying principles of social justice and advocacy. We strive to prepare school counselors to become agents of change and key educational leaders in their schools and communities who work to ensure the success of all students, particularly those who have been historically underserved."

In order to qualify for the recognition, Ockerman said school counseling faculty revised curricula and field experiences to align with the five core Transformed School Counseling competencies: leadership, advocacy, using and assessing data, teaming and collaboration, and counseling. Faculty also secured a partnership with Chicago Public Schools and convened an advisory council that comprises current students, alumni, counseling faculty, CPS school counseling leaders, practicing school counselors and supervisors to discuss current program practices, the vision and mission of the program, and revised admission criteria.

Affiliation with the national organization is a draw for employers when hiring school counselors as well as for potential school counseling students, Ockerman said.

Barbara Karpouzian, director of secondary school counseling at Chicago Public Schools, said she asks for a list of graduates from DePaul's program so she can recommend them to her high school principals.

"These future counselors are passionate about serving our schools," Karpouzian said. "They understand that the paradigm has shifted and that we live in a high-tech, data-driven world with identifiable achievement gaps that need to be addressed. Currently, 11 percent of our counselors are DePaul graduates and we look forward to increasing that number. It is my goal to ensure that we hire quality counselors. Our principals will receive a portfolio of DePaul resumes with my recommendation for employment."

Erin Mason, assistant professor in DePaul's school counseling program, said the honor puts graduates of DePaul's program at a distinct advantage. "They're finding that when they go into their positions after they graduate they're already ahead of the curve. They're showing up as brand-new school counselors with distinct knowledge and skills in which their veteran counterparts were never trained. They are positioned to lead."

The School of Education's graduate counseling program is one of the largest counseling programs in Illinois and one of the most sought-after master's degree programs at DePaul. School counseling is the largest of the program's three tracks, which also include community counseling and college student development. For more information about the school counseling program, please contact Ockerman at (773) 325-8646 or mockerma@depaul.edu.

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About DePaul

With more than 25,000 students, DePaul University is the largest Catholic university in the United States and the largest private, non-profit university in the Midwest. The university offers approximately 275 graduate and undergraduate programs of study on two Chicago campuses, four suburban campuses and several international locations. Founded in 1898, DePaul remains committed to providing a quality education through personal attention to students from a wide range of backgrounds. For more information, visit www.depaul.edu.

Media Contact:

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(312) 362-8508

US House Passes H.R.1 to Reduce Funding for Elementary & Secondary School Counseling Program

Amanda Fitzgerald, ASCA Director of Public Policy

On Feb. 19th, the House Majority passed H.R. 1. This resolution would cut education by \$10.6 billion or 15.3%, an unprecedented amount. In addition to several competitive grant programs, many formula-funded programs (like IDEA and Title I) would also take a very big hit. ASCA has been making the rounds with the Senate staff to let them know that H.R. 1 would be catastrophic to our nation's schools, as well as meeting with House staff to voice our displeasure with the passage of H.R. 1. The Senate, which is still controlled by the Democrats, is not expected to pass H.R. 1 as it is currently written, so we're working hard on the Senate to restore as much funding as possible to each of these meaningful programs.

H.R. 1 would eliminate the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program (ESSCP). While we certainly don't want this program eliminated, if it were to be cut, it would not be the end of the profession as we know it. In fact, most school counselors out there won't even know that the federal funding has been cut. A majority of school counselors are funded through district/county and state funding. Some counselors are funded through federal dollars - and you would probably know if you were one of them (some people are funded or 0.5 of their position is funded through title 1 dollars, for instance). Even fewer are funded through the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program (ESSCP) and you would definitely know if you fall into this category. The ESSCP is a competitive grant program that your district would have had to apply for and win. It is a 3-year continuation grant (meaning if your district won the grant 2 years ago then you still need this program to be funded for the third year). NEA estimates, that if the ESSCP were completely eliminated, approximately 625 counseling jobs would be cut - and those aren't all school counselors as school social workers and school psychologists can be hired from that program as well. To put it in perspective there were approximately 105,000 school counselors in the 2008-2009 school year. That said, we don't want to see 1 school counseling job lost, so it is important that we work together to fight H.R. 1. In addition, as previously mentioned, there are other proposed cuts to education that may certainly impact how your building operates or how school counseling is funded. Many states use Perkins money (which has been cut) to fund portions of their state school counseling initiatives, services to special education would be reduced drastically and college access to our neediest students would be severely cut.

The reality is that the federal investment on education is already very low. It is estimated that less than 10% of any schools budget will come from the federal government, leaving 90% of the funding up to state and local funding sources. As we know, many of our states are also in a budget deficit so I would encourage everyone to become very active with your state school counselor association because that will impact your job security the most!

Also, I wanted to make everyone aware that ASCA has been working to combat H.R. 1 for the past several weeks. It was the first resolution introduced by the House this Congress session and we've been making Hill visits and reaching out to both House and Senate members to voice our concerns about all of these cuts to education, specifically the ESSCP. Also, ASCA is a member of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), which is a coalition of over 85 organizations that work year round to increase the federal investment on education. With the work of CEF, ASCA is present at every budget hearing, appropriations meeting, and one-on-one Hill visits to ask questions, raise awareness and educate lawmakers about the real life work educators are doing every day in our nation's schools, including the role of the school counselor and the impact each of you has on our students.

I've also uploaded a letter that CEF and ASCA has circulated to the Senate in opposition of H.R. 1 to the file cabinet - feel free to disseminate or keep for your files.

For any other questions please feel free to email me directly at:

afitzgerald@schoolcounselor.org

A critical shortage of school counselors

By Valerie Strauss

Washington Post

Look at these statistics on the number of students that counselors in American public schools are expected to help:

Though the recommended number per counselor is 250 students, the American School Counselor Associations shows that the national average is actually one counselor for every 457 students. And those figures were from 2008-09, the latest available, but before many states slashed school budgets last year.

Some states have much higher ratios than the national average, including Arizona, the home state of Jared Lee

Loughner, the 22-year-old charged with killing 6 and wounding 14, including Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

In 2008-09, there were in Arizona's public schools on average 743 students for each counselor, the third biggest gap.

California had the largest gap:

814 students per student. Coming in second was Minnesota, with 759 students per counselor.

Five states met the recommended ratio: Louisiana, 238 students per counselor; Mississippi, 234 students per counselor; New Hampshire, 233 students per counselor; Vermont, 207 students per counselor; Wyoming, 197 students per counselor.

It's too bad that mental health issues often get their closest attention when it is too late.

But the news gets worse: According to a study published last year, at least one in five young children in the United States has some mental disorder, but fewer than half of the states require public elementary schools to hire mental health professionals.

The study, conducted by Assistant Professor Randall Reback of Barnard College and Columbia University, showed:

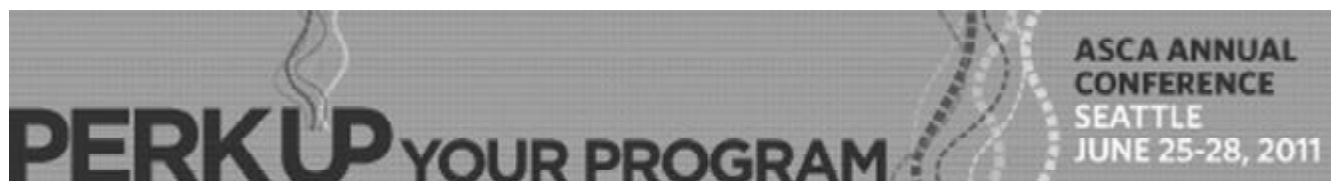
*Students in states with more aggressive elementary counseling policies make greater test score gains.

*Elementary counselors substantially influence teachers' perceptions of school climate.

*The adoption of state-funded counselor subsidies or minimum counselor-student ratios reduces the number of teachers who report losing instruction time because they have to deal with student misbehavior. And there is a decline in the number of teachers who report problems with students who are physically fighting, skipping class, stealing or using drugs.

The results imply that there may be substantial public and private benefits derived from providing additional elementary school counselors. The study, titled "Schools' Mental Health Services and Young Children's Emotions, Behavior, and Learning," was published in the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management.

It's too bad that mental health issues often get their closest attention when it is too late.





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