

Volusia School Counselor Association (VSCA) School Counselor Job Role Survey *January 2023*



*VSCA is a chapter of the Florida School
Counselor Association and an affiliate of the
American School Counselor Association*

Presented April 10, 2023

VSCA Mission Statement

The mission of the Volusia School Counselor Association is to be a collective voice for Volusia County school counselors and provide them with opportunities that build their knowledge, skills, network, and resources in the development of comprehensive school counseling programs.

VSCA Executive Board 2022-23

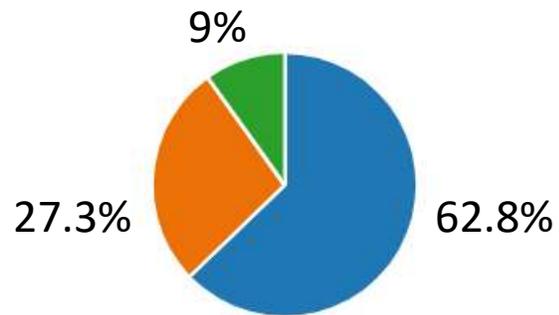
President	Jeannie Maddox
President Elect	Dana Copes
President Elect-elect	Lisette Nazario-Lamplugh

Membership Overview

1. Are you a member of Volusia School Counselor Association

[More Details](#)

● Yes	76
● No	33
● I'm not sure	12



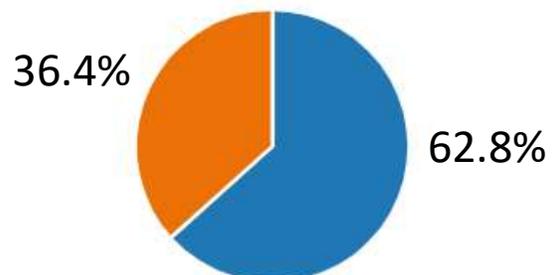
VSCA offers:

- Advocacy for all VCS counselors
- New counselor Orientation prior to pre-planning
- New counselor mentoring
- DATA day
- Scholarships for Seniors and 8th graders
- Awards Recognition Program
- Book clubs

2. Are you a member of the union (VUE)?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	76
● No	44



Number of school counselors completing this survey 121 (74.69%)

Number of school counselors in VCS 162

Elementary	58
Middle	38
High	58
Alternative	8

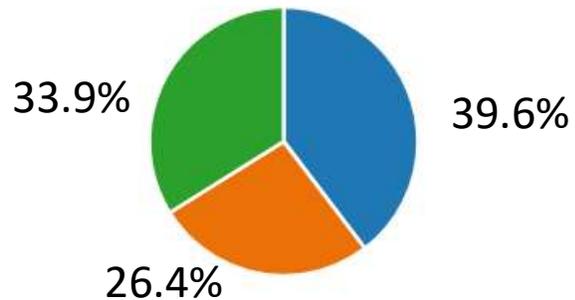
Number of vacant school counselor positions in VCS

Elementary	21 (2 elementary schools have no counselor at all)
Middle	2
High	4

3. At what level do you work? Choose the age range of students you support most of the time if you work at a school with more than one level.

[More Details](#)

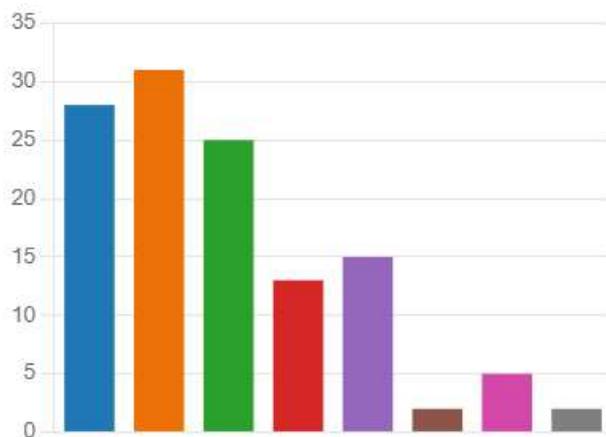
Elementary	48
Middle	32
High	41



4. How many school counselors are at your school?

[More Details](#)

1	28
2	31
3	25
4	13
5	15
6	2
7	5
8	2



Caseload of VCS School Counselors

What is the number of students on your caseload?

The numbers below represent individual caseloads of school counselors.

- Elementary 225-861 (10 single counselors w/600-861 students)
- Middle 286-600+
- High 200-600+
- Alternative <100

"I have such a large caseload that I am not able to adequately provide the services I should be providing to all of my students. It is overwhelming. I am just putting out fires all day every day, and it is difficult to be proactive in the way that I want to be. The division of the caseloads at my school is grossly unfair. I have nearly 700 students while others at my school have fewer than 200."

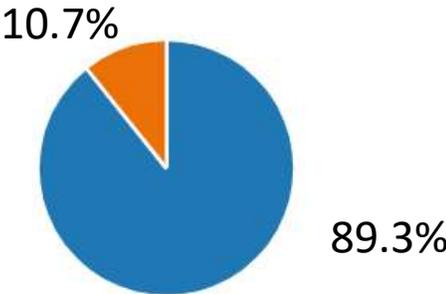
Many school counselors feel important parts of our job have been "outsourced." Adding SEL TOAs and College and Career Counselors take away parts of the job school counselors love and were trained to do. School Counselors would rather have additional certified school counselors added to their school than these specialty positions. Doing so would help to even out caseloads especially at high school. It would allow school counselors to work on all areas, academic, social/emotional, college and career as a school counseling team.

Other Duties Assigned

6. Do you have additional duties at your school that fall outside of your duties as a school counselor?
Examples include but are not limited to: MTSS Chair, Testing Coordinator, Cafeteria duty, morning or afternoon supervision, 504 contact, ESOL contact, coach, or club sponsor?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	108
● No	13



8. Do you receive a supplement for any of the duties selected?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	54
● No	54



9. If yes, for which duties (or duty) do you receive a supplement? (0 point)

[More Details](#)

54
Responses

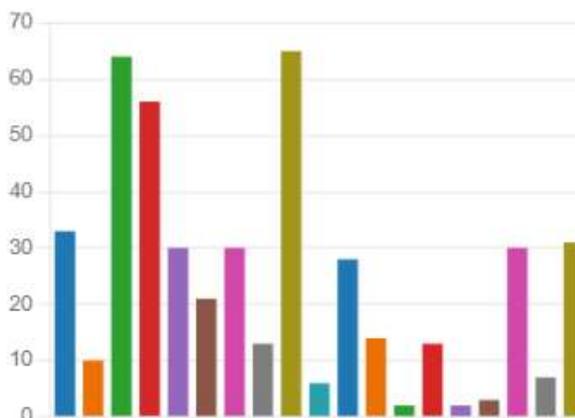
Latest Responses
"lunch duty mtss"

Of the 108 counselors who perform additional duties assigned by their principal, only 50% receive a supplement for these duties. There is a lack of consistency among principals in how supplements are distributed. This is an issue school counselors would like to see addressed across the district at every level.

7. Please select any additional duties you perform?

[More Details](#)

MTSS Chairperson	33
Testing Coordinator	10
Testing Administrator/Proctor	64
Make- up testing	56
Morning Supervision	30
Afternoon Supervision	21
Lunch Supervision	30
ESOL Coordinator	13
504 Coordinator	65
PBIS Chairperson	6
CARS Provider	28
Used as a Substitute	14
Athletic Coach	2
Club Sponsor	13
SAC Chair	2
PTA/PTSO	3
School Leadership Team	30
Team leader (Middle school)	7
Other	31



In previous decades, school counselors were selectively given an extended duty supplement referred to as the “guidance” supplement. While some principals freely gave the “guidance” supplement per contract language, others put strings on it or refused to give it at all. Several years ago, the contract changed, and school counselors were given a stipend similar to what school psychologists, social workers, and speech clinicians received.

Many administrators are not clear on the how the school counselor stipend is different from the old “guidance” supplement and are attaching uncompensated duties to it. Counselors are often told you have to do “x job” because you are getting a stipend. The words are being used interchangeably and incorrectly. Because administrators think of the stipend like the old “guidance” supplement, they believe the stipend allows them to assign most any job they want to the school counselor without compensation.

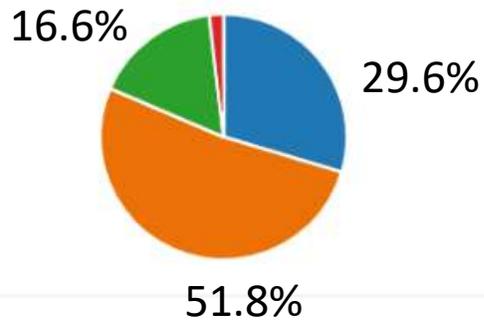
A clear explanation giving administrators the correct information about supplements vs. the stipend would help improve school counselor morale and administrator understanding of the additional duties requiring compensation and how the school counselor stipend is part of our salary, not an excuse to add additional duties.

“I’ve asked for a morning supervision or leadership team supplement (as only grade chairs attend that), but my principal said I already get a school counselor supplement and that covers morning/afternoon duties as well. I talked to VUE and it doesn’t, but I don’t want to argue.”

10. For the additional duty you have, do you feel like you were able to decline the duty?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	16
● No	28
● Some of them	9
● NA	1



11. Which duty do you feel like you were NOT able to decline?

[More Details](#)

38

Responses

Latest Responses

"testing "

"I have declined duty in the past and was still forced to do it. I feel like I am forced to do all my duties, I have to fight to get out of some. Then I am refused supplements, but when that duty is given to another person, they get the supplement. It's really not about the money, it's about the principle. They tell me that my position is not respected or valued. I try to be a team player, but it really is hard to be a team player when you are not even on the team."

"504 contact and SLT was lumped in with my team leader supplement."

"Testing Proctor, Make-up Testing, WIDA testing, School Leadership Team, 504 coordinator (since nobody else had much training or knowledge of 504 and we were told it had to stay with school counselors and that it doesn't take much time to do)"

Testing Coordinator	3
Testing, Proctor	10
Testing, Make-up	6
MTSS (PST)	8
504 Contact	13
ESOL/WIDA Testing	6
Lunch duty	10
SLT	2
CARS	2
Special Area teacher	1
Attendance PST	1
Gifted Chair	1
Yearbook	1

**Duties School
Counselors feel they
are unable to
decline**

Disparity in School Counselor Duties: Duties Assigned vs Supplemented

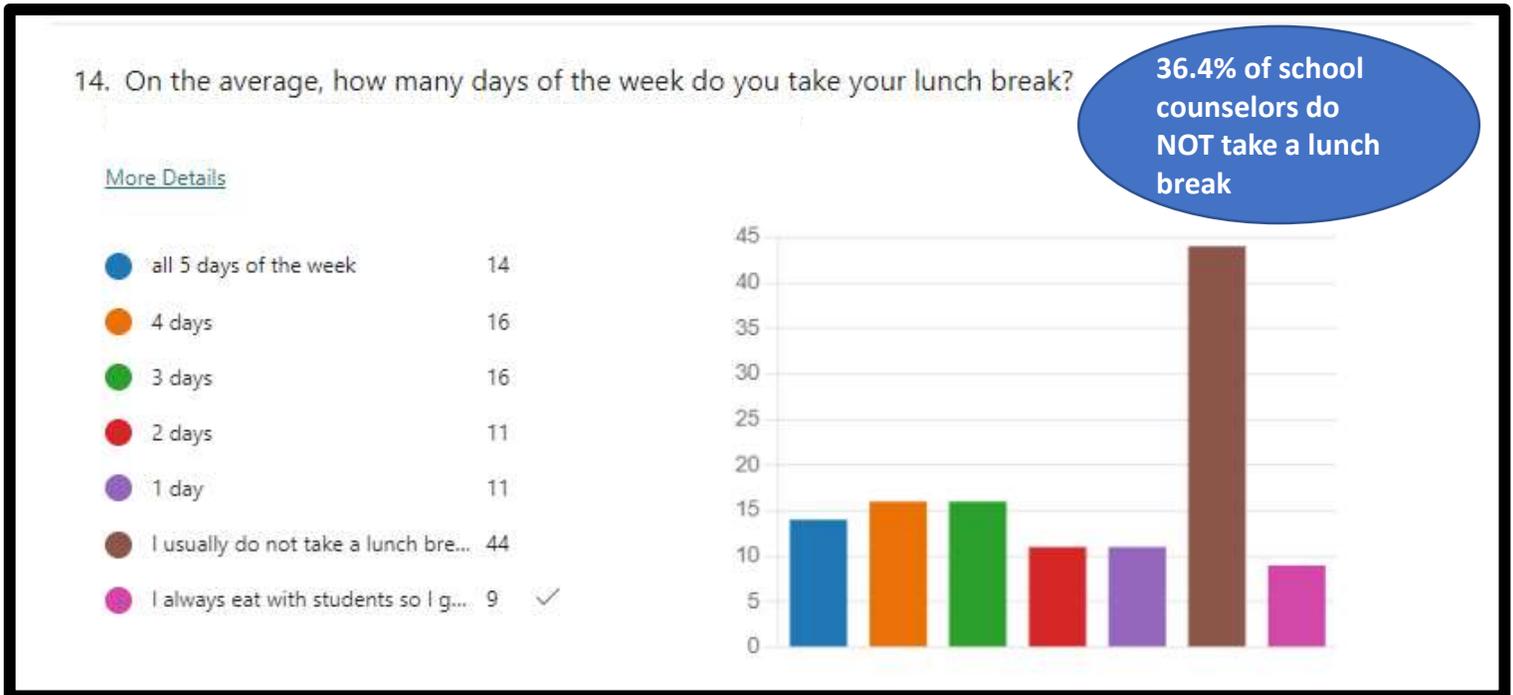
Duty	Total	Supplemented
MTSS Chair	33	25
Morning Supervision	30	13
Afternoon Supervision	21	12
Lunch Supervision	30	9
ESOL Coordinator	13	1
504 Coordinator	65	2
Test Coordinator	10	7
Substitute	14	0
Athletic Coach	2	1
Club Sponsor	13	6
School Leadership Team	30	3
Team Leader (MS)	7	1

"I split Testing coordination with the other counselor which comes to about \$400.00 before taxes. Thank you for the platform to communicate with the Superintendent. Please know that School Counselors that are Testing coordinators are now losing 3 months contact with students due to the K-5 Renaissance/FAST testing and preparations. :(I've come in on Saturdays and during the Christmas Holidays to try to keep up with the expanded testing requirements. I have noticed the impact on the students. Please help."

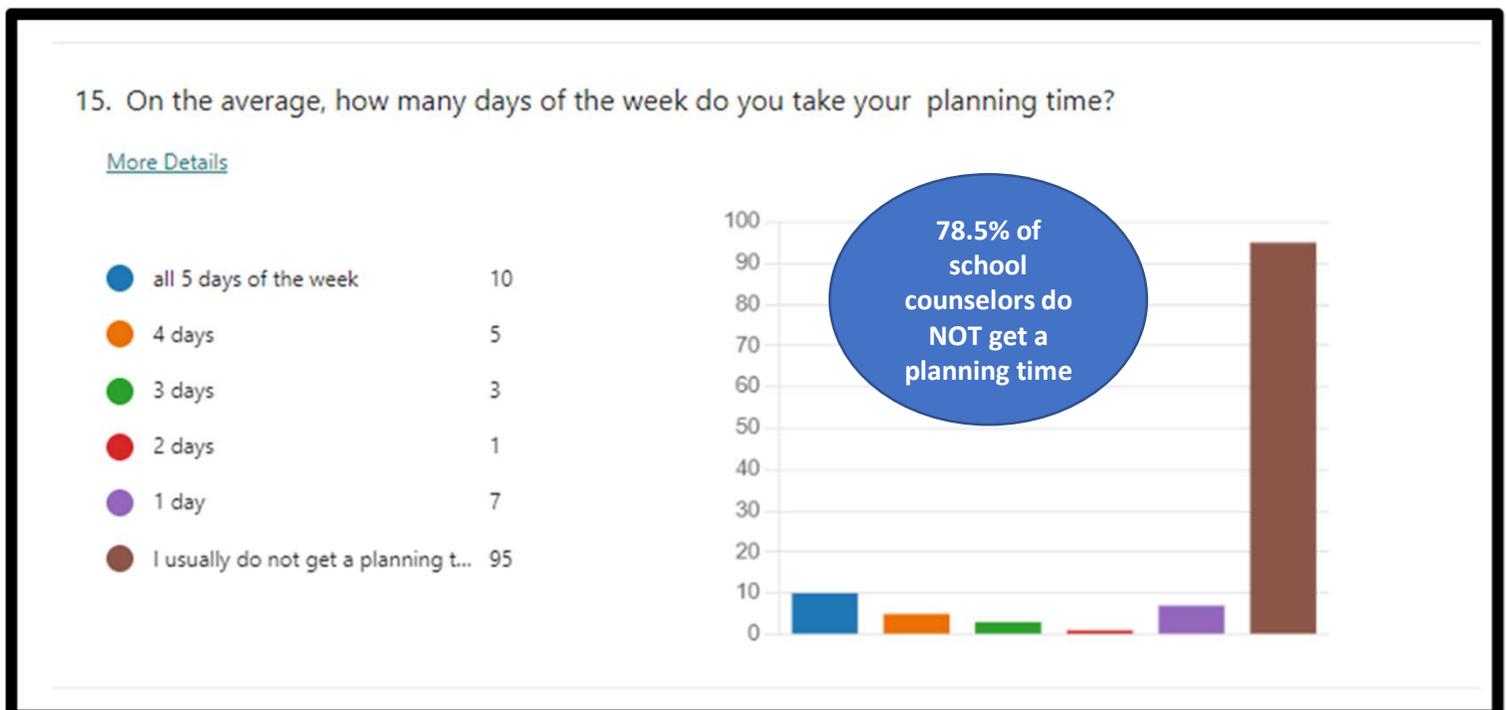
ESOL... but I did not want to do it. I was told there was no one else to do it. It takes up way more time than the \$500 I am getting in a stipend.

"MTSS / PST chair. This is something forced on me, not voluntary. Even though I am paid, I did not choose to do it."

School Counselor Lunch and Planning



"I feel like counselors are used, as needed. I feel like I work harder than many others... and get paid the same or even less! I run around and do many non-counseling related duties. I take on a lot of extra work and it is expected that I don't take a planning/lunch if I am asked to go to a classroom. Even others get to eat and I get sent to handle discipline. I would never speak of this before, but it is just now starting to really upset me. I don't want to burn out...."



VUE Contract Provisions: Lunch, Planning, Fair Share Duties

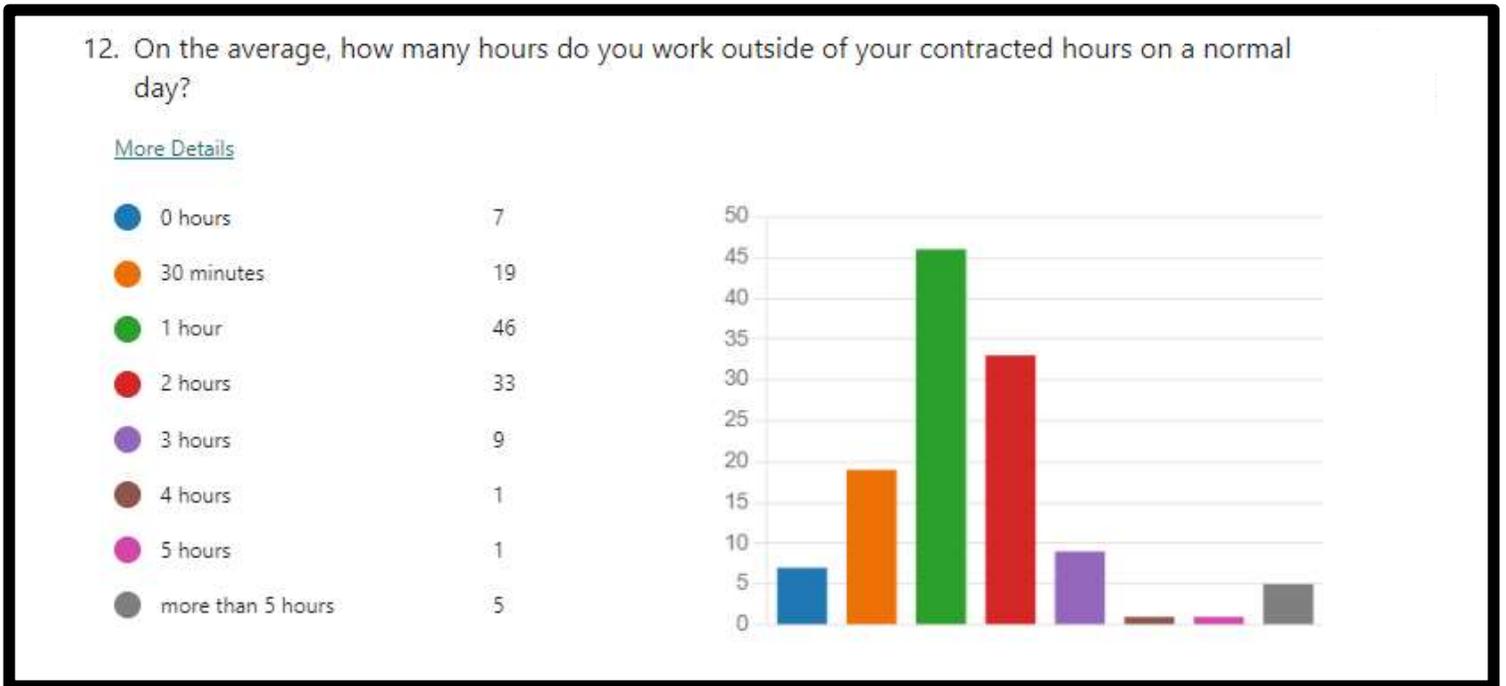
ARTICLE 9 WORKING HOURS AND CONDITIONS p.19

J. As much as practicable, non-teaching duties shall not be performed by teachers. These non-teaching duties include collecting money (except as in Section L of this Article); supervising cafeterias and buses delivering books; taking inventories; distributing supplies; duplicating instructional materials; similar clerical and/or custodial duties. When supervisory needs are not met by teacher volunteers, and supervision of corridors, rest rooms, stairways and other areas is warranted as determined by the Principal, it will be assigned on a scheduled rotating basis. No teacher shall have to provide supervision for more than 36 times per year except in cases of emergency. Prior to the implementation of a rotation of duties under this paragraph, the Principal shall discuss the plan with the faculty (during pre-planning if the rotation is to begin at the start of the year, or at a faculty meeting during the year if the rotation is to be implemented during the year). In lieu of performing duties on a scheduled rotating basis, a faculty may, with the approval of the principal, select an alternative plan for the faculty to provide such student supervision following the waiver process outlined in article 11.

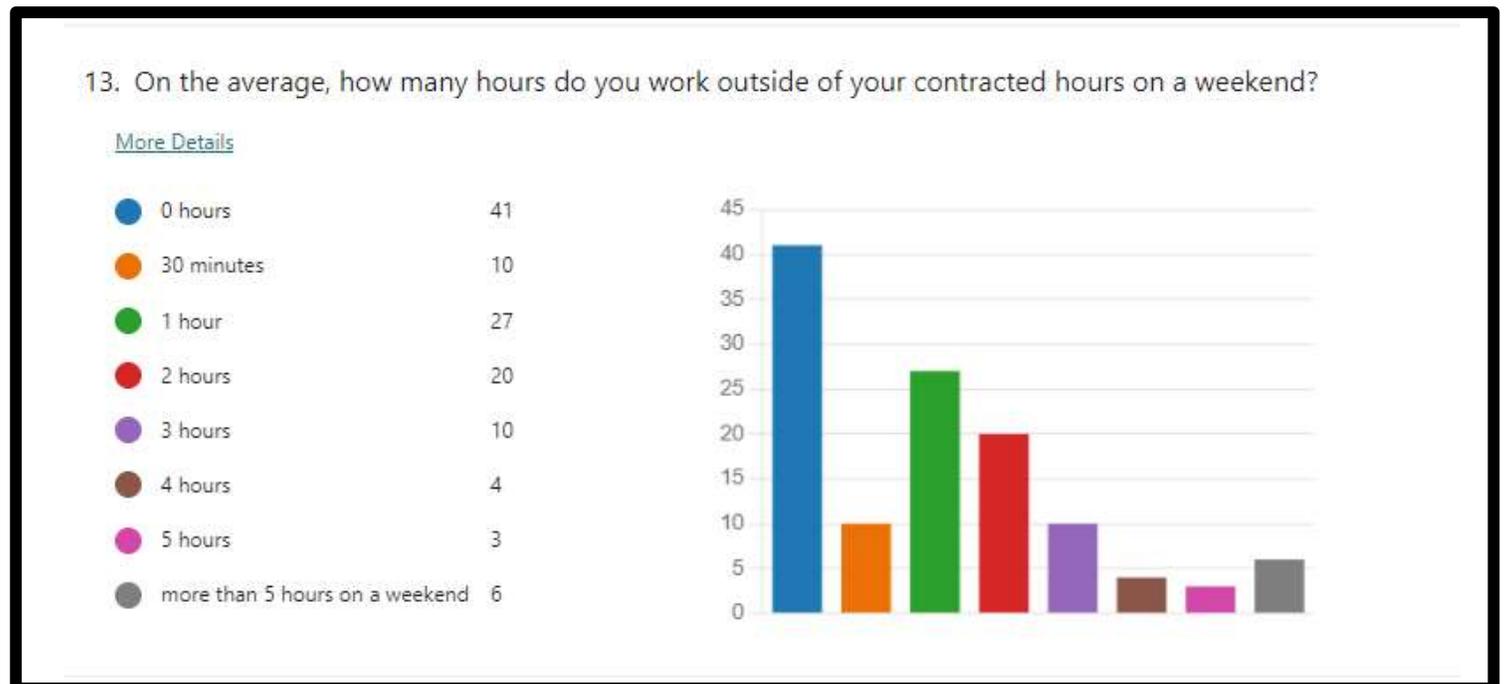
N. Teachers shall not be required temporarily to perform administrative duties (out of the bargaining unit) above grade without appropriate compensation.

P. The workday for district level bargaining unit members shall be seven-and one-half hours, including a half hour paid lunch. With the agreement of the supervisor, an employee may extend his or her workday to 8 hours for the purpose of having a one-hour lunch, with one half hour of lunch being unpaid. The unpaid half hour shall be duty free. District level bargaining unit members will have, in the course of the week, 325 minutes of non-instructional time. This time is not required to be continuous.

Unpaid Hours by School Counselors



Hours worked beyond the contract on an average day = **182.5 hours** which is equal to the workday of an additional **24.33 school counselors**.



Hours worked beyond the contract on an average weekend is **163 hours** which is equal to the workday of **21.7 school counselors**. There are so many “other duties assigned,” school counselors are working late and on weekends for free to meet the needs of students or finish the “other duties assigned” by the principal.

ARTICLE 28 SUPPLEMENTS p. 60

All supplements listed are paid for the performance of duties beyond the regular working day and normal job responsibilities and are not approved solely on the basis of position classification or previous supplement payment. Additional time spent fulfilling job responsibilities does not constitute a basis for compensation beyond the teachers' regular salary.

I. Supervisory Duty supplement may be paid for morning or afternoon duty. One person may be supplemented for both morning and afternoon supervisory duty.

N. To qualify for an extended duty supplement one or more of the following criteria must be met and be in accordance with B above as requested and assigned by the Principal:

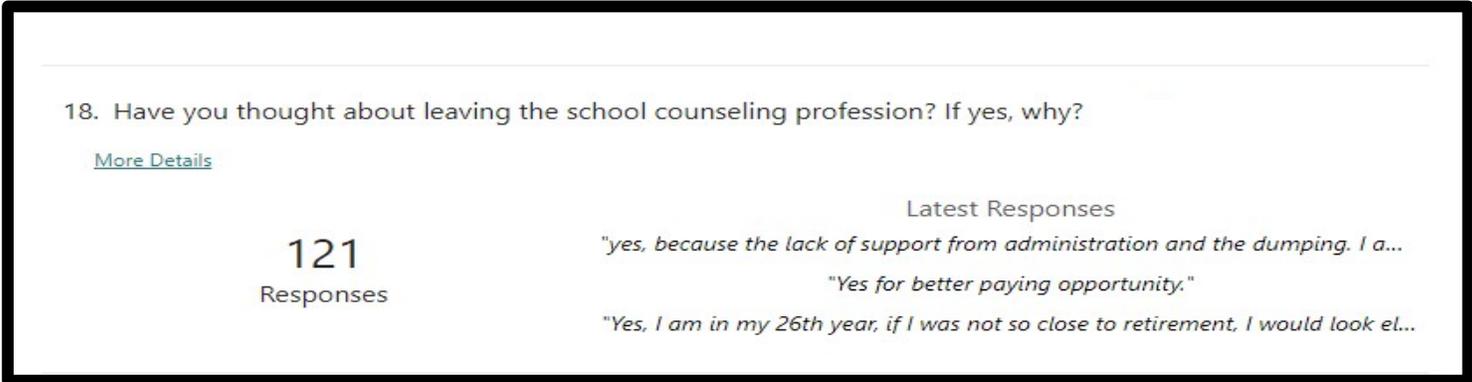
1. loss of contract identified duty free lunch period,

2. loss of contract identified planning time,

3. a documented minimum average of 2 1/2 hours per week beyond the regular work week.

P. Coaches for sports at the middle school level shall be paid \$1,000 per season and shall increase by 2% in 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

Have you thought about leaving the school counseling profession?



- **Yes 62 (51.2%)**
- **No 30**
- Varied responses 29
- Reasons for leaving:
 - 35.5% Overwhelmed by other duties
 - 27.2% Money
 - 21.5% Lack of respect
 - 18.2% Lack of support
 - 17% Stress
 - 5.7% Behavior of students
 - 5.7% Poor communication

School counselors are considering leaving our county because of a lack of respect and support from their administration. This is most often exhibited in them being assigned other duties that prevent them from performing the role of the school counselor.

All of these reasons for leaving the profession of school counseling, with the exception of money, are easily addressed by district leadership with training and education of school principals as to the appropriate use of school counselor personnel. Principals will not make this change without a directive from the district. This change must happen from the top down.

Comments from the field

(all comments have been included in a separate document)

"I think it needs to be established one way or the other whether or not we are SEL teachers or school counselors. When a large part of the day is teaching and you factor in lunch duty and a working lunch (no planning), that leaves little time for all of the other duties AND time with the kids. Not many people understand everything we do. It is a pretty long list. None of it (except for MTSS which is its own full-time job) is bad, there's just a LOT of it."

"Yes, because I get tired of constantly having more to do than I have time to do it. It gets old. I feel like other things take me away from actually working with the students. Time with the students is what is constantly pushed aside. I do spend time with them in special area, but I'm talking about check-ins, mediation, groups, supporting behavior plans especially with newer teachers."

"The Administration does not back counselors or respect their role. I am called to remove students from the classroom, have students thrown into my room without notice who are acting up. I speak up and I am told this is what a counselor does. I am always asked to substitute and I have voiced my opposition and told this is what we expect. I am not working as a counselor but a "handyman" I don't get uninterrupted time to do groups as I am always pulled for test administration. When I object, I'm told I'm not acting like part of the family. I am so sick and tired of the egregious ethical dilemma that I'm put in that I am leaving to hopefully work in another county. I have a Doctorate degree."

"This was a career change for me and I'm almost sorry that I left a secure (career service) state government position to be a school counselor (no tenure anymore, no stability). I am put in position where instead of being an advocate for students, I'm a disciplinarian. I spend too much time involved with investigating fights, arguments, and who did what to whom, as well as conducting Peer Mediations and No Contact Contracts. Is this what is meant by the statement, "Spend a minimum of 80 percent of time providing direct and indirect services."? I spend a lot of time in Parent/Teacher Conferences, not because of academic concerns but because a parent may have an issue with 1 teacher but the principal does not want parents meeting with just 1 or 2 teachers. So the meeting is scheduled for all students' teachers with the counselor facilitating (mediating) the meeting. I do not ever get a lunch break, everyday I am expected to be in the cafeteria during my grade-level lunch to help monitor the cafeteria. When I eat lunch, it's while I'm returning phone calls, or a student, teacher, or both are in my office and I'm eating my lunch and talking with them at the same time. I don't get a planning period (I did not know counselors get a planning period). I don't get to meet with teachers during grade-level lunch or planning to collaborate or complete MTSS forms. I spend a lot of time working late after school, generally I work until it gets dark outside so when it get dark later, I'm at school later. I am also expected to monitor the hallways during every class exchange everyday. A 4-minute exchange may turn out to be 6-10 minutes getting students into class everyday."

"If I didn't have a supportive and fantastic administration I would not still be in this job."

Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors

Appropriate Activities for School Counselors	Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ advisement and appraisal for academic planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ building the master schedule
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ orientation, coordination and academic advising for new students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ providing short-term individual and small-group counseling services to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ interpreting student records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ maintaining student records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ computing grade-point averages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management and the role of noncognitive factors in student success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ supervising classrooms or common areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ keeping clerical records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ assisting with duties in the principal's office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ advocating for students at individual education plan meetings and 504 meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards, as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ serving as a data entry clerk

VCS Strategic Plan and School Counselors

- VSCA fully supports the VCS Strategic Plan.
- School counselors used appropriately can help VCS meet its strategic goals.
- School counselors are highly qualified to help their school with Goal 1 High-Quality Instruction, Goal 3 Safe and Supportive Environment, and Goal 5 Communication & Community Engagement.
- Survey results clearly describe the struggle school counselors have with performing the school counselor role due to other duties. This prevents them from being able to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan.

1. High-Quality Instruction

VCS Certified School Counselor Job Description

A. Student Success for All

1. *Design and implement a data-driven, comprehensive school counseling program for all students to address barriers to student learning and to close the achievement/opportunity gap, and support SIP and District Strategic Plan goals.
2. *Spend a minimum of 80 percent of time providing direct and indirect services and 20 percent in program planning and school support activities.
 - *Direct services include, but are not limited to, school counseling core curriculum, individual counseling and student planning, classroom lessons, small group counseling, and preventative and responsive services.
 - *Indirect services on behalf of students include, but not limited to, referrals for additional assistance and consultation/collaboration with parents, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders to create a learning environment promoting educational equity, access, and success for every student
3. *Deliver programs that promote students' development of essential mindsets and behavior standards including, but not limited to, learning skills, social skills, self-management skills, and college/career readiness skills.
4. *Review and disaggregate student achievement, attendance, and behavior data to identify and implement interventions with current knowledge of grade level promotion and retention criteria (HIGH SCHOOL - graduation requirements).
5. *Use school data to identify and assist individual students who do not perform at grade level and do not have opportunities and resources to be successful in school.
6. *Create yearly, data-driven goals that advance student outcomes in areas of academic, social/emotional, and college/career development.
7. *Use the skills of leadership, advocacy and collaboration to create systemic change to improve the academic, social/ emotional, and post-graduate success of all students.
8. HIGH SCHOOL - *Conducts credit checks with students and monitors at-risk students to ensure on-time graduation.

B. Promoting Positive School Climate .

4. *Provide preventative education and skill building along with counseling for students during times of transition, separation, heightened stress and critical change.
- 6.*Support the continuum of mental health services, including prevention and tiered intervention strategies, and collaborate with both school-based and community mental health providers to enhance student success.

C. Leadership and Advocacy

3. *Use student data to demonstrate a need for systemic change in areas such as course enrollment patterns; equity and access; and achievement, opportunity and/or information gaps.
4. *Advocate for student equity and access to a 21st century education that fosters college and career readiness and promotes post-secondary success.
8. *Collaborate with school staff in the analysis of student performance data, rigorous goal setting, and development of effective action plans for improving academic, social/emotional outcomes for all students.

3. Safe & Supportive Environment

3A. Utilize district-supported multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and social-emotional learning (SEL) practices.

3B. Standardized discipline processes and provide consistent alternatives to suspension.

3C. Support school leaders to build a positive school culture at their buildings.

3D. Enhance support around school safety.

VCS Certified School Counselor Job Description

A. Student Success for All

1. *Design and implement a data-driven, comprehensive school counseling program for all students to address barriers to student learning and to close the achievement/opportunity gap, and support SIP and District Strategic Plan goals.

2. *Spend a minimum of 80 percent of time providing direct and indirect services and 20 percent in program planning and school support activities. (1.5 hours a day)

*Direct services include, but are not limited to, school counseling core curriculum, individual counseling and student planning, classroom lessons, small group counseling, and preventative and responsive services.

*Indirect services on behalf of students include, but not limited to, referrals for additional assistance and consultation/collaboration with parents, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders to create a learning environment promoting educational equity, access, and success for every student.

3. *Deliver programs that promote students' development of essential mindsets and behavior standards including, but not limited to, learning skills, social skills, self-management skills, and college/career readiness skills.

5. *Use school data to identify and assist individual students who do not perform at grade level and do not have opportunities and resources to be successful in school.

6. *Create yearly, data-driven goals that advance student outcomes in areas of academic, social/emotional, and college/career development.

7. *Use the skills of leadership, advocacy and collaboration to create systemic change to improve the academic, social/ emotional, and post-graduate success of all students.

B. Promoting Positive School Climate

1. *Act as a system change agent in collaboration with the school leadership team to ensure a safe, supportive, and respectful school climate that promotes the social/emotional and academic development and success of all students.

4. *Provide preventative education and skill building along with counseling for students during times of transition, separation, heightened stress and critical change.

5. *Use appropriate responses and a variety of intervention strategies to meet the needs of the individual, group or school community before, during and after crisis response.

6. *Support the continuum of mental health services, including prevention and tiered intervention strategies, and collaborate with both school-based and community mental health providers to enhance student success.

5. Communication & Community Engagement

5A. Strengthen partnerships and deepen engagement with the broader community.

5B. Communicate openly and effectively with families and the community so they feel welcomed, valued and informed.

5C. Communicate information quickly, clearly and accurately to all employees across the district.

B. Promoting Positive School Climate

1. *Act as a system change agent in collaboration with the school leadership team to ensure a safe, supportive, and respectful school climate that promotes the social/emotional and academic development and success of all students.

2. *Foster family and community partnerships to support the social/emotional, academic and career development of all students.

3. *Infuse cultural competence, ethical and professional competencies in planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating the comprehensive school counseling program.

5. *Use appropriate responses and a variety of intervention strategies to meet the needs of the individual, group or school community before, during and after crisis response.

6. *Support the continuum of mental health services, including prevention and tiered intervention strategies, and collaborate with both school-based and community mental health providers to enhance student success.

Final Thoughts...

- The comments of school counselors in this survey indicate principals are not utilizing school counselors to do the job indicated in the VCS certified school counselor job description.
- Over 50% of school counselors responding to this survey are thinking of leaving the district due to not being able to do the job for which they were hired with other duties being a top concern.
- Counselors have been told about “other duties,” *“There’s no one else to do them.”* School counselors are not trained to do these jobs either. We must be trained by district personnel to do ESOL testing, MTSS, 504s, gifted referrals, and be the testing coordinator. None of these things were taught in the school counselors’ Master’s program.
- Principals need education as to the role of the school counselor and how they can be used to implement the VCS strategic plan.
- Principals need education on how school counselors can be used to improve student behavior and not used as disciplinarians.
- Principals and school counselors need education on the difference in the school counselor stipend and supplements. Confusion is still prevalent due to language and practices from past years.
- Although not covered in this survey, school counselors report to VSCA that their admin does not know how to use the VSET school counselor rubric and some do not feel they are fairly assessed regarding their performance. School Counselors are often assessed as if they are classroom teachers or “dinged” because the “other duties assigned” prevent them from doing the job of a school counselor as indicated in the rubric.
- District intervention with principals and area superintendents on other duties, compensation, and contract language would go a long way towards making school counselors feel supported and respected.
- School counselors are committed to their students and need district level support in order to provide them the services they deserve.