

MVLA
Hanover Research Reports, 2018-19

HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING STUDY: CAPSTONE REPORT

- **Research Brief: Integrated and Comprehensive High School Counseling** – First, Hanover reviewed secondary literature on integrated and comprehensive high school counseling systems and compiled best practices and expert recommendations into a research brief.
- **Benchmarking Study: Counseling Services** – Second, Hanover identified service delivery models and practices for high school counseling through in-depth interviews with exemplary high schools. The study included 10 interviews with providers of counseling and student support services at highly-ranked public and private high schools in the United States, as well as two interviews with academic counselors in MVLA.
- **Counseling Services Survey** – Finally, Hanover gathered the perceptions of students, parents/guardians, and school staff surrounding the use, value, and accessibility of current counseling services and preferences the district’s counseling model. The survey was conducted in April and May of 2019 and included 3,178 respondents.
- **Recommendations:**
 - Increase the delivery of counseling services through **small-group formats**, while ensuring that students continue to have access to individual counseling.
 - *MVLA students prefer individual counseling over small-group settings, though most are supportive of having a mix of the two, while parents and staff are most supportive of a mix of one-on-one and small-group delivery models.*
 - Explore a delivery model that incorporates counseling services provided through a **whole-class or large-group setting**.
 - *Several exemplary high schools interviewed for this report use whole-class counseling at select grade levels to increase interaction time with larger numbers of students earlier in their high school career, particularly in schools with large counselor caseloads.*
 - Shift to a counseling model that invites parents to attend **some but not all meetings**.
 - *At MVLA, the majority of all stakeholder groups surveyed prefer this approach, including staff, parents, and students.*
 - Integrate counseling and other support services into a **multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework** to facilitate collaboration and ensure the efficient provision of services.
 - *Several interviewees from exemplary public and private high schools schedule regular inter-departmental meetings to facilitate communication and collaboration across counseling and broader student support services staff.*
 - Pursue a **wellness-focused approach** for the counseling and student services center.
 - *Multiple interviewees from exemplary public schools recommend referring to counseling centers more broadly as “wellness centers” to emphasize that counselors are focused on supporting students holistically.*

BELL SCHEDULE AND START TIMES STUDY: CAPSTONE REPORT

- **SCHOOL START TIMES LITERATURE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS** – First, Hanover examined professional recommendations and peer-reviewed research studies related to the effects of school start times on secondary school students. Additionally, Hanover investigated the experiences of districts that have implemented changes to their school start times to identify critical implementation considerations.
- **REVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULING MODELS** – Second, Hanover reviewed best practices for high school bell scheduling. Specifically, Hanover provided an overview of available bell scheduling options and their associated impacts on student achievement.
- **BELL SCHEDULE AND COUNSELING SERVICES SURVEY** – Finally, Hanover gathered the perceptions of students, parents/guardians, and school staff surrounding MVLA’s current bell schedule and counseling services. The survey was conducted in April and May of 2019 and included 3,178 respondents.
- **Recommendations:**
 - **Delay school start times** to 8:30 a.m. at the earliest.
 - *Notably, approximately 200 MVLA students, parents, and staff referenced “start time” and “later” in their open-ended survey comments when asked about desired changes to the bell schedule, even though the survey did not explicitly ask respondents about school start times.*
 - Take **measures to accommodate** families and students with inflexible drop-off times and combat traffic congestion that may increase as a result of a delayed start time.
 - *MVLA should consider implementing an early morning period along with a delay to school start times during which students whose schedules require them to arrive to school early can study, receive counseling and academic supports, and/or participate in physical activities.*
 - Consider shifting to a bell schedule with **four double-period days and one single-period** day in a week.
 - *Research finds that block scheduling models may positively impact students’ grades and disciplinary outcomes.*
 - Provide instructional staff with **professional development** on how to engage students in longer double-period classes.
 - *Research shows that teachers may require training on how to engage students in longer class periods.*