

**School Counselor Technology Use and School-Family-Community Partnerships**

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### **Abstract**

Research in understanding effective strategies to develop stakeholder engagement is needed to further define the school counselor role and best outreach practices. School counselors are increasing their daily technology use. This study explores how school counselor technology use is related to school-family-community partnerships. School counselors ( $N = 87$ ) answered questions about technology use and school-family-community partnerships. Results indicated certain technology resources were significantly correlated with school-family-community partnerships. Implications for school counselors and future research directions are discussed.

*Keywords:* school counselors, school-family-community partnerships, engaging stakeholders, communication with parents

## **School Counselor Technology Use and School-Family-Community Partnerships**

Previous research reported 75% of Advanced Placement and National Writing Project teachers described that using the Internet and other digital media added to their workload, as well as increased their need to be fluent in new technology practices and skills (Purcell, Heaps, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013). In addition, 67% of these teachers reported that the Internet had a “major impact” on their ability to work with parents (Purcell et al., 2013, para. 4). As technology continues to affect the role of teachers, school counselors are also affected by this growing need to adapt to the technological changes occurring in communication with students and families. The purpose of this study was to observe the relationships between school-family-community partnerships and school counselor technology use.

### **School-Family-Community Partnerships**

School-family-community partnerships are defined as “collaborative initiatives or relationships among school personnel, parents, family members, community members, and representatives of community-based organizations such as businesses, churches, libraries, and social service agencies” (Bryan, 2005, p. 220). Examples of school-family-community partnerships may include providing workshops to parents, visiting families in their homes, coordinating student support programs with local businesses or organizations, and connecting families to resources in the community (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). School-family-community partnerships have been found to help support parents and families, improve school climate, and foster student success in school as well as the transition out of high school (Epstein, 1995; Lapan, Osana, Tucker, & Kosciulek, 2002). The role of school-family-community partnerships in

improving school climate is especially noteworthy, as school climate has been linked to students' internalizing and externalizing behaviors as well as life satisfaction (Suldo, McMahan, Chappel, & Loker, 2012).

A position statement by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA; 2010) on school-family-community partnerships asserts that, "School counselors have an essential and unique role in promoting, facilitating, and advocating for successful collaboration with parents/guardians and community stakeholders" (p. 54). The ASCA National Model, the framework that ASCA (2012) recommends that comprehensive school counseling programs emphasize collaboration both within and outside of the school to support student achievement. Through collaboration with teachers, administrators, parents, and community agencies, school counselors can help create a sense of community (ASCA, 2012). Comprehensive school counseling programs based on the ASCA National Model are associated with more students taking the ACT, higher average ACT scores, increased standardized test scores, improved graduation rate of students in career- and technical-focused education programs, and a higher percentage of nontraditional students in those programs (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stevenson, 2012). As an important component of the ASCA National Model, school-family-community partnerships may also be related to these positive student outcomes. In addition, in their examination of comprehensive school counseling programs, Galassi, Griffin, and Akos (2008) considered the development of school-family-community partnerships as part of school counselors' role as agents of systemic change.

## **Family Involvement**

Building school-family-community partnerships includes engaging parents and guardians in their children's education (Bryan, 2005). School counselor communication with parents and guardians is especially important because parental engagement and involvement are valuable for student mental health (Piko & Hamvai, 2010). Several parent and guardian variables have been significantly related to student academic achievement and happiness, suggesting that parents and guardians are important for adolescent life satisfaction and overall well-being (Jeynes, 2007; Piko & Hamvai, 2010). Similarly, Suldo et al. (2012) found parental involvement to be the single factor most related to children's mental health compared to sharing of resources, order and discipline, school building appearance, student interpersonal relations, and student-teacher relations. Interviews of parents and school counselors have affirmed the importance of parent-school communication and connectedness (Gareau & Sawatzky, 1995). School counselors are in a prime position to develop this relationship between parents and the school (Walker, Shenker, & Hoover-Oempsey, 2010; White & Kelly, 2010). Just as Minke and Anderson (2003) emphasized the importance of increasing understanding and communication between teachers and students' families, Walker et al. (2010) suggested a need for understanding communication between school counselors and families to increase family involvement.

Special attention should also be given to school counselor communication with at-risk and/or marginalized families. Villalba, Gonzalez, Hines, and Borders (2014) discussed how a lack of knowledge about U.S. educational systems continues to be a barrier for Latino families. Similarly, McWayne and Melzi (2014) suggested the need to

analyze the involvement of low-income families of different ethnic and linguistic groups beyond monolingual English-speaking families. They outlined how Latino caregivers' involvement may depend on multiple factors, including caregiver age, home language, employment, or timing of immigration (McWayne & Melzi, 2014). It is important to note, however, that race and ethnicity are not the only barriers to successful family-school communication. For example, foster parents have unique qualities that require particular engagement interventions (Dorsey, Conover, & Revillion, 2014). In addition, some school counselors have taken steps to help fathers become more engaged in their child's learning (Beale, 1999).

Lack of parent engagement may create barriers to students' education regarding, for example, Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier 2 behavior plans (Frey et al., 2013). Many RTI Tier 2 behavior plans have failed due to a lack of proper parent engagement or alignment at home with school-based interventions (Frey et al., 2013). Yet, suggested tools for parent involvement in Tier 2 behavior plans, such as motivational interviewing, have only been helpful for families who are accessible (Frey et al., 2013). Given the unique disadvantages marginalized students and their families face, House and Hayes (2002) have acknowledged that it is the school counselor's role to facilitate all students' rigorous academic preparation and access to resources to close the achievement gap. The question then becomes, how do school counselors reach marginalized parents to increase involvement in their child's education?

### **Using Technology**

There has been recent support for flexible formats for parent involvement, including non-conventional meeting times and the use of electronic newsletters or text

messages (Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013). Some research indicates that smartphones, social networking, and Facebook are being used by marginalized families (Edwards-Gaura, Whitaker, & Self-Brown, 2014), suggesting that technology use may be particularly helpful for school counselors in engaging with parents. School counselors are using technology more and more as part of their everyday work (Stifel, Brown, Jimerson, & Dowdy, 2013; Wilczenski & Coomey, 2006), and Sheridan and Kim (2016) suggest the importance of considering technology's role in developing successful relationships between families and the school. In fact, Patrikakou (2015) opined that technology may "play a vital role in increasing parental involvement in the educational process" (p. 2257).

Despite the benefits of parent engagement and the possibility of harnessing technology to create these parent-school connections, school counselors do not always feel especially involved in building school-family-community partnerships. Bryan and Holcomb-McCoy (2007) found that overall, school counselors think of themselves as "somewhat" involved in school-family-community relationships (p. 450). Furthermore, school counselors' perceptions of their own role, their confidence in their partnership-building skills, and their attitudes about these partnerships are significantly linked to perceptions of their involvement in school-family-community partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). These observations suggest that school counselors are more likely to be involved in school-family-community partnerships if they have confidence in, and positive attitudes about, developing community partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

This current study explored additional factors that might be related to school counselors' development of school-family-community partnerships. We particularly emphasized technology's role in communicating with families—a topic that Patrikakou (2015) called an “urgent mandate for researchers” (p. 2257). In an effort to evaluate how school counselors can use technology to increase parental communication and involvement, the present study explored how school counselors perceived their school-family-community partnership and how that partnership related to a school counselors' technology use. The current study asked the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between school counselors' use of technology and school-family-community partnerships?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between school counselors' use of technology and school-home partnerships?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between school counselors' comfort using technology and school-family-community partnerships?

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Participants in this study consisted of school counselors in a Midwestern state ( $N = 87$ ). Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 1. Most of the sample identified as female (90.7%), and the rest identified as male (9.3%). The participant age ranged from 23 to 64 ( $M = 37.97$  years,  $SD = 10.31$ ). Almost all participants identified as White or European (97.7%), with a small minority identifying as Hispanic or Latino (1.1%), and a similar amount chose not to answer (1.1%). Seven percent of the sample consisted of school counseling interns, while most were licensed school counselors (93%). Participants worked in all educational levels: elementary (13.8%), middle/junior high



(12.6%), high (54%), and “other” (e.g., K-12, K-8, etc.; 19.5%). Most participants worked at public schools (84.9%), while others worked at private (9.3%), charter (4.7%), and alternative schools (1.1%). The highest degree earned included BS or BA (6.9%); MA, MS, or MEd (87.4%); PhD or EdD (2.2%); and Advanced Specialist (3.4%).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Sample (n = 87).*

Variable		Range	M (SD)
Age		23 - 64	37.97 (10.31)
Years a school counselor		1 - 32	11.01 (7.98)
Enrollment size of school		35 - 3300	905.25 (676.52)
Number of students on caseload		20 - 970	365.97 (178.05)
Number of school counselors at school		1 - 9	2.46 (1.73)
Percent of students qualifying for F/RL		0 - 100	41.1 (25.5)
Variable		n	%
Gender	Male	8	9.3
	Female	78	90.7
	No Response	1	1.1
Race and ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino	1	1.1
	White or European	85	97.7
	No Response	1	1.1
Intern status	Intern	6	7.0
	Not intern	81	93.0
Highest degree earned	Bachelor's	6	6.9
	Master's	76	87.4
	Doctorate	1	2.2
	Advanced Specialist	3	3.4
School accreditation type	CACREP	47	54.0
	NCATE	3	3.4
	CACREP & CORE	3	3.4
	Not Accredited	2	2.3
	Don't know	29	33.4
	Other (e.g., APA)	3	3.4
School setting	Elementary	12	13.8
	Middle School	11	12.6
	High School	47	54.0
	Other (e.g., K-8)	17	19.5
Type of School	Public	73	84.9
	Private	8	9.3
	Charter	4	4.7
	Other	1	1.1
Community Setting	Urban	14	16.1
	Rural	38	43.7
	Suburban	35	40.2

The average number of students enrolled in the schools in which these school counselors worked was 905.25 ( $SD = 676.52$ ). There was an average of 2.46 school counselors in each school ( $SD = 1.73$ ). The average number of students on each school counselor's caseload was 365.97 ( $SD = 178.05$ ). The average percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch in schools in this sample as reported by school counselors was 41.1% ( $SD = 25.25$ ).

### **Procedure**

School counselors who were listed on a statewide school counseling organization's listserv ( $n \sim 375$ ) were invited via email. In order to invite interns, the research team contacted the director of clinical training from each of the five counseling programs in the state to request that an invitation message to participate in the study be shared with every school counseling master's degree student who was currently completing an internship at a practicum site. All participants were invited via an email that included a link to a self-report survey via the survey software Qualtrics (2015). School counselors and interns who responded to the entire survey made up the sample ( $N = 87$ ), yielding a response rate of 23.2%.

### **Measures**

An instrument was created using the survey employed by Bryan and Holcomb-McCoy in their 2010 study in addition to specific technology-related items. The instrument was administered to the sample measuring their perceptions of school-family-community partnerships as well as their use and knowledge of different technology within a school system. Demographic variables were also collected.

**Demographics.** Participants were asked for basic demographic variables, such as age, gender, and ethnicity. They were also asked about how many years they have been a school counselor, the school setting where they work (i.e., elementary, middle, high), the type of school in which they work (i.e., public, private, charter), and the community setting where their school is located (i.e., urban, rural, suburban). Participants were also asked about their highest degree level obtained and the accreditation of their graduate program.

**School-Family-Community Partnerships.** The School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey Revised (SCIPS-R; Bryan & Griffin, 2010) was used to examine participants' perceptions of their involvement and role in partnerships (e.g., helping school staff understand the surrounding community and coordinating student support programs) and perceptions of partnerships within the school (e.g., the school atmosphere, parental involvement, the principal's skill in building relationships, and participants' own skills in building partnerships). It is worth emphasizing that only school counselors' perceptions were examined in this survey; these perceptions were not corroborated by surveys of parents, administrators, or any others. Five questions measure perceptions about involvement and role in partnerships. These items are answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1: Not at All, to 5: Very Frequently. Seven questions measure perceptions about partnerships within the school and are scored on a 4-point Likert-type scale from 1: Strongly Disagree, to 4: Strongly Agree.

Participants' responses to questions about school-family-community partnerships on the SCIPS-R were summed to create a composite score for school-family-community (SFC) partnerships. Higher scores reflected better school counselor perceptions of their

own role in SFC partnerships, greater confidence in their partnership-building skills, and more positive attitudes about these partnerships.

The SCIPS (original survey) and SCIPS-R (revised survey) have been used in previous research on school-family-community partnerships (Clemens, Carey, & Harrington, 2010; Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). In developing the survey, Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy (2007) sought advice from experts on parent involvement and school-family-community partnerships on the content and clarity of the questions. Cronbach's alpha has been reported as .90, indicating strong internal consistency (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). The internal consistency for this study was strong, with a Cronbach's alpha of .91.

**School-home partnerships.** To answer the second research question, overall perception of parental involvement was assessed by calculating the mean of the eight school-family engagement questions of the SCIPS-R. This sample of school counselors showed moderate involvement ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ), which is higher than previous samples using the SCIPS-R (Bryan & Griffin, 2010). Cronbach's alpha for these items in this sample was .75, slightly lower than the previously recorded consistency of .84 (Bryan & Griffin, 2010).

**Technology Use.** Both school counselors and school counseling interns were asked to complete 10 questions on what technology they used related to their work as a school counselor (e.g., email, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Questions were developed by two of the authors and piloted with a licensed school counselor and graduate students to check the wording and structure of the questions (Groves et al., 2004). The questions were revised based on feedback to improve clarity and consistency. Participants were

asked to endorse all technology used both in their general work as a school counselor and specifically in their communication with parents. They were also asked to endorse which technology resources they used most and least often, what they used each technology resource for, and what they found to be most effective when communicating with parents. Participants were also asked to rate how comfortable they felt in their ability to use each different technology resource using a 6-point Likert-type scale from 1: very uncomfortable, to 6: very comfortable. These demographic questions were added on to the SCIPS-R's demographic section based on the research questions in this study. No changes were made to the school-family-community partnerships survey questions in the SCIPS-R, and therefore Bryan and Griffin's (2010) analyses still support the survey's reliability and validity.

## Results

Correlations between SFC partnerships score and demographic variables were calculated. All correlations are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Correlations Between SFC Partnerships and Demographic Variables (n = 87).*

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SFC Partnership	-						
2. Gender	-.00	-					
3. Age	.05	.05	-				
4. Highest Degree Earned	.24*	.10	.37**	-			
5. Years a school counselor	-.05	.02	.88***	.23	-		
6. School enrollment size	-.15	-.32**	-.03	-.04	.04	-	
7. Number of students on caseload	.17	-.08	.21	.09	.30*	.25*	-
8. Number of counselors at school	-.14	-.33**	-.09	.02	-.10	.90***	.02

\* $p < .04$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

One demographic variable was significantly correlated with the SFC partnerships score. The level of degree earned was significantly positively correlated with SFC partnerships,  $r(86) = .24, p < .05$ . The higher the degree earned by a school counselor, the higher their SFC partnerships score. School counselors with higher degrees (e.g., PhD) reported more competence and comfort with school-family-community engagement.

The first research question asked about school counselors' technology use and their role in school-family-community partnerships. Independent samples *t*-tests were used to test for significant differences in SFC partnership scores between school counselors who did and did not utilize each technology resource. All *t*-test results are in Table 3. Cohen's *d* effect size values were calculated for each significant *t*-test. School counselors who used three different types of technology had significantly higher SFC partnership scores than school counselors who did not use those technology resources.

**Table 3**

*Results of t-Test for SFC Partnership Scores and Technology Use (n = 87).*

	Technology Use				95% CI for Mean Difference	<i>t</i> (85)	<i>d</i>
	Uses		Does not use				
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>n</i>			
Text messaging	226.44 (19.79)	26	216.89 (18.21)	61	.74, 18.37	2.16*	.50
Apps	230.72 (20.77)	19	216.74 (17.61)	68	4.34, 23.63	2.88**	.73
School system	219.55 (18.75)	80	221.17 (25.03)	7	-17.76, 14.53	-.20	-
Naviance	218.54 (18.81)	29	220.00 (19.33)	58	-10.44, 7.10	-.379	-
Facebook	223.23 (18.60)	23	218.44 (19.22)	64	-4.58, 14.16	1.02	-
Twitter	223.86 (20.84)	22	218.31 (18.43)	65	-3.95, 15.05	1.16	-
Instagram	236.00 (16.97)	3	219.27 (19.03)	84	-10.32, 43.78	1.23	-
Pinterest	220.55 (23.12)	30	219.21 (16.86)	57	-7.35, 10.03	.31	-
Tumblr	223.00 (5.66)	3	219.58 (19.28)	84	-23.87, 30.70	.25	-
Blogs	221.88 (18.30)	17	219.16 (19.33)	70	-7.84, 13.27	.51	-
Google Drive	219.88 (19.64)	68	218.83 (17.19)	19	-9.06, 11.16	.21	-
Google Sites	224.08 (18.71)	41	215.83 (18.73)	46	.20, 16.30	2.04*	.44
Video calling	228.45 (20.48)	12	218.37 (18.65)	75	-2.04, 22.20	1.65	-

*Note:* School system includes products such as Infinite Campus, PowerSchool, Blackboard, etc. Video calling includes services such as Skype, Google Hangouts, Facetime, etc.

Specifically school counselors who used Google Sites,  $t(85) = 2.04$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .44$ , text messages,  $t(85) = 2.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .50$ , or apps,  $t(85) = 2.88$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d = .73$  all had higher average SFC partnership scores than other school counselors. The effect sizes for these three technology resources suggest moderate to high practical significance for these findings. These results provide evidence that school counselor use of Google Sites, text messaging, or apps is related to school-family-community partnerships.

To answer the second research question, overall perception of parental involvement was assessed by calculating the average of the school-family engagement questions of the SCIPS-R (Bryan & Griffin, 2010). Feelings of competence with blogs were positively correlated with school counselors' reports of parent engagement,  $r(86) = .28$ ,  $p = .008$ . Like the first research question, the effect size ( $r = .28$ ) for this second research question was small, indicating small practical significance, but still supporting the statistically significant relationship between school counselors' use of blogs and perception of parental involvement.

The third research question regarded whether school counselors' comfort with technology was related to their role in school-family-community partnerships. In fact, no significant correlation was found between feelings of technology competence with any technology medium and participants' SFC partnership scores.

## **Discussion**

As technology becomes an ever-present part of education (Friedman, 2005), understanding the uses and benefits it can provide for school counselors and SFC partnerships is essential. In this study, school counselors were surveyed about their SFC partnerships, technology use for counseling, communication with parents and

guardians, and demographics. Higher SFC partnership scores were associated with school counselors' having a higher educational degree. With further education, counselors may be exposed to and become more familiar with ways to increase their effectiveness with SFC partnerships. Previous research has pointed to the connection between school counselor self-efficacy and improved partnership building (Bryan & Griffin, 2010). It could be that more education, such as a doctoral degree or specialty, increases a school counselors' self-efficacy and therefore improves community partnerships. More research in this area is needed.

An understanding of counselors' technology use was necessary to understand how technology is related with SFC partnerships. School counselors recognize the need to evolve with the rapidly changing world of technology (Sabella, Poynton, & Isaacs, 2010). This study is a first step to understanding school counselor technology use. Future studies can seek to increase support for school counselors' use of technology to create more SFC partnerships.

School counselors who endorsed using Google Sites and smartphone applications also scored highly on SFC partnerships. As schools increase their use of technology that functionally connects them with others (such as applications to which parents and guardians have access), it could be that school counselors are finding them essential to their practice. Text messaging was also significantly related to a higher SFC partnership score. It is possible that participants who text are using personal phone numbers. Perhaps counselors who are willing to connect through their personal technology may also be more willing to make community connections. However, school counselors' use of their personal phone number to communicate with families is



concerning from an ethical standpoint. ASCA's (2016) code of ethics states that school counselors must differentiate their words and actions as private individuals and those representing their professional role as school counselors. Using one's private number to communicate with families could blur this line between personal and professional. Furthermore, the ASCA's (2016) code of ethics specifically states that school counselors must not use "personal texts to interact with students unless specifically encouraged and sanctioned by the school district" and must "adhere to professional boundaries and legal, ethical and school district guidelines when using technology with students, parents/guardians or school staff" (A.5.d.).

Parents have displayed a preference for increased communication with teachers through text messaging and social media (Thompson, Mazer, & Grady, 2015). Although not captured in this study, it could be that parents also prefer this increase in text messaging and social media use in their communication with school counselors. While the finding in this study highlights the importance of text messaging, further research is needed to explore parent preferences, school counselor capabilities, and the concerns around ethical boundaries.

Bryan and Griffin (2010) described the importance of SFC partnerships and collaboration. They articulated that partnerships with community members often "emerge outside of the school while school-home partnerships and collaborative teams tend to be initiated from inside the school" (p. 82). It could be that the results of this study, which observe a relationship between SFC partnerships and school counselors' use of text messaging, apps, and Google Sites, capture new avenues to grow partnerships, both inside and outside the school. Furthermore, school counselors'

perceptions of time constraints have been related to SFC partnerships and other important relationships (Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). It may be that the significant results of this study support counselors in maximizing their time to foster their SFC partnerships. Further research is needed.

### **Implications**

The findings in this study would support the recommendation that school counselors consider using technology as a medium of communication to improve their school-family-community partnerships. School counselors can explore various communication options with an awareness of their specific school community and school counseling program requirements. It may be helpful for school counselors to consult with their administrators and district leadership team to discuss appropriate communication mediums and agree upon safe and effective communication strategies.

Additionally, it is important to note the ethical considerations of using technology to communicate with parents and guardians. The American Counseling Association (ACA) included social media guidelines in its 2014 ethical code. Relevant sections include: H.6.a., which advises counselors to create separate personal and professional profiles on social media sites; and H.6.d., which states that counselors must not share confidential information on social media (ACA, 2014). Furthermore, the ASCA (2016) ethical code states that school counselors may not use “personal social media, personal e-mail accounts or personal texts to interact with students unless specifically encouraged and sanctioned by the school district” (A.5.d.). We hope that school counselors, keeping these ethical imperatives in mind, will use technology to

communicate with their stakeholders in ways that make sense for the individual school counselor and the school community.

### **Limitations**

There are limitations of this study that should be considered. First, this study has a relatively small, homogeneous sample size. All the counselors are from the same Midwestern state and they were recruited through their membership to a statewide professional organization. Another limitation is the methodology of this study—measuring school counselor *perception* of school-family-community partnerships rather than observing the actual community relationships. It is possible that counselors perceive strong community partnerships that in fact are not strong. Finally, there is also a lack of context about technology use. Participants' endorsements of technology use were not verified. It could be that a school counselor who has an account for Twitter and therefore endorsed that he or she uses this resource does not actually use Twitter regularly for their work as a school counselor. Having an account is much different than using that account regularly for school purposes. Future research should seek to explore differences in amount of technology use in relation to SFC partnerships.

### **Future Research**

In order to further understand the relationship between SFC partnerships and technology, researching different variables affecting both SFC partnerships and technology use is needed. Since counselors with higher educational degrees were found to have higher SFC partnership scores, information about what is being taught in advanced courses related to partnership-building skills should be explored. Further education may increase exposure to *content* about community partnership building;

however, practical experience through length of time in one school could increase perceptions and true strength of partnerships with the community. Although it was not measured in this study, further understanding the relationship between years in a community as a counselor and SFC partnerships should also be considered as a contributing variable.

Regarding technology, years of experience and overall comfort with different technology mediums could affect SFC partnership in the future (though comfort with technology was not associated with SFC partnerships in this study), as the day-to-day use of technology could influence education related communication. The use of text messaging by counselors and the purpose of the messages also needs clarification. There could be a connection between the type of person that is willing to use a personal number and this person's comfort with work boundaries. Gaining information in these areas can promote the development of structured facilitation of technology use in a school setting.

## **Conclusion**

The presence of technology is increasing in everyday professional life. School counselors can use technology to foster relationships with stakeholders and connect with parents and guardians. This study was a first step in exploring the relationships between school counselor technology use and engaging with students' families and the community.

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## **Biographical Statements**

Sarah Cronin, MA, is a doctoral candidate studying counseling psychology at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities' Department of Educational Psychology. She supervises master's-level graduate counseling students and is a student counselor in the college counseling setting. Sarah has research experience studying school counseling, under-represented college students, student development, and supervision.

Marguerite Ohrtman, EdD, is the director of school counseling and M.A. clinical training in the counseling and student personnel psychology program at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. Dr. Ohrtman is a licensed school counselor and licensed professional counselor in Minnesota. Marguerite's research interests include the achievement gap, at-risk youth, and the training of school counselors.

Emily Colton, MA, is a licensed school counselor and graduate of the Department of Educational Psychology – counseling and student personnel psychology program at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. She is currently an elementary school counselor in Saint Paul Public Schools. Her research interests include school counselor documentation practices, professional development and training for school counselors and teachers, and school counselor technology use.

Brita Crouse, MA, is a graduate of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities' counseling and student personnel psychology program. She holds a master's degree in educational psychology and is a licensed K-12 professional school counselor. She is currently employed as a non-public school counselor in the Twin Cities, working with 7-12 grade students in the areas of academics, college and career preparation, and social/emotional management and skill building. Her interests include anxiety and stress

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Jessica Depuydt, MA, is a licensed school counselor working in the surrounding Twin Cities area. Her master's degree in educational psychology was obtained from the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities as was her bachelor's in psychology. She has worked with students of varying ages and backgrounds, including rural, Latino, and affluent populations. Her interests include preventative psychology, counselor technology use, anxiety in the student population, and health psychology.

Camille Merwin, MA, is a licensed professional school counselor and graduate of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities' counseling and student personnel psychology program. She is employed as a school counselor in Thief River Falls, MN. Her interests include anxiety in middle school populations, mental health coaching, school counselor technology use, and preventative psychology work at the middle school level.

Megan Rinn, MA, is a licensed elementary school counselor with Saint Paul Public Schools in St. Paul, MN. She holds a degree in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. She has a background in early childhood education as a preschool teacher at an urban public charter school. Megan's interests include prevention and early intervention, counseling at-risk students, and empowering students to take charge of their own education.