

# *THE* POWER *of* GUIDANCE

GIVING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THE COLLEGE COUNSELING THEY NEED



NEW YORK CITY COMPTROLLER  
JOHN C. LIU

OCTOBER 2012

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# THE POWER OF GUIDANCE:

*Giving high school students the college counseling they need*

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Comptroller's Office

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## Contents

1	Introduction
2	School Counseling and Advising
6	Recommendations
10	Access and Mentoring Programs
14	Conclusion

## About the New York City Comptroller's Office

The New York City Comptroller, an independently elected official, is the Chief Financial Officer of the City of New York. The mission of the office is to ensure the financial health of New York City by advising the Mayor, the City Council, and the public of the City's financial condition. The Comptroller also makes recommendations on City programs and operations, fiscal policies, and financial transactions. In addition, the Comptroller manages the assets of the five New York City Pension Funds, performs budgetary analysis, keeps the City's accounts, audits City agencies, manages the City's debt issuance, and registers proposed contracts. His office employs a workforce of more than 700 professional staff members. These employees include accountants, attorneys, computer analysts, economists, engineers, budget, financial, and investment analysts, claim specialists, and researchers, in addition to clerical and administrative support staff.

## About Beyond High School NYC

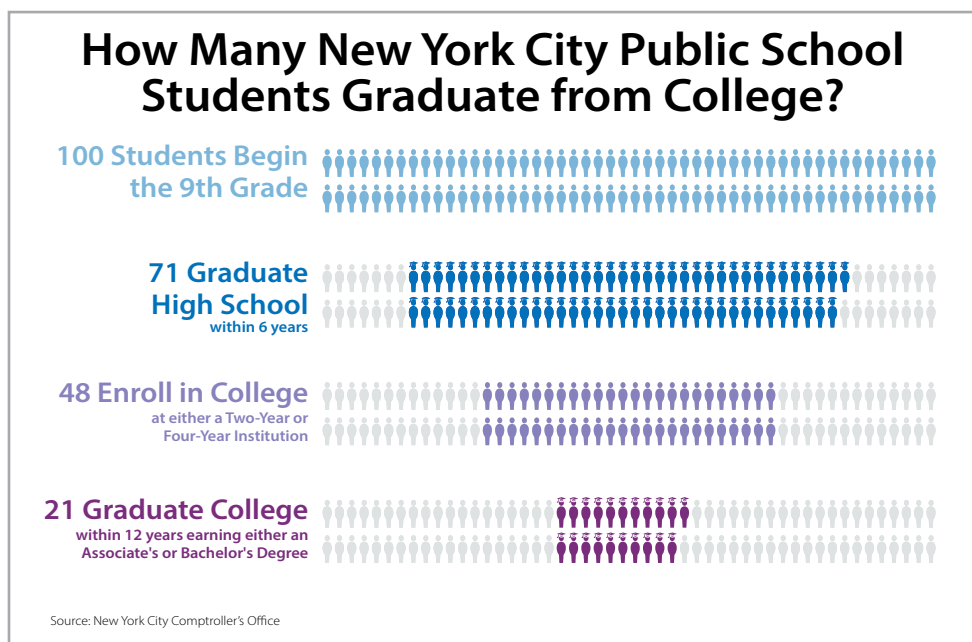
Beyond High School NYC is a major initiative launched by Comptroller John C. Liu to increase the proportion of New Yorkers with higher education to 60 percent by the year 2025 through strategic investments in public education.

## Introduction

In recent years, policymakers have shifted their focus from high school graduation rates to post-secondary success. A high school diploma is no longer sufficient for students to meet the demands of the 21st century global economy. The New York State Education Department reports that roughly two-thirds of all new jobs require some form of post-secondary education, and that seven of the top ten fastest-growing occupations require a post-secondary degree.<sup>1</sup>

Students who do not complete college cannot compete with their peers who have received degrees. Nationwide, in 2010, young adults aged 25-34 with a bachelor's degree earned 50 percent more than their peers with only a high school diploma.<sup>2</sup> This includes young adults from every racial category. According to the 2010 American Community Survey, the average annual earnings for New York City residents with a bachelor's degree were almost \$33,000 greater than workers who had only completed high school.<sup>3</sup> Over the course of a lifetime, a worker with a bachelor's degree will earn \$1.5 million more than a worker with only a high school degree.<sup>4</sup>

The New York City Comptroller's Office has estimated that only one out of every five public school students earns a college degree within twelve years of starting high school.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, this estimate of 21 percent is nearly identical to the current college readiness rate of 21.6 percent.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>1</sup> "Our Challenge: Graduating Students College and Career Ready," presentation by New York State Education Commissioner John B. King, Jr., June 2012.

<sup>2</sup> "The Condition of Education 2012," U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, May 2012.

<sup>3</sup> "Education and Synthetic Work-Life Earnings Estimates," American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, September 2011.

<sup>4</sup> The estimate of lifetime earnings is derived from the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS). This survey does not track individuals over time, which would provide direct estimates of individual lifetime earnings. Rather, the ACS offers a snapshot of individual earnings at a point in time. First, the mean earnings for individuals by education level and age group were calculated. Then lifetime earnings were estimated based on the assumption that a NYC high school graduate's earnings, for example, would follow the pattern of earnings of NYC high school graduates of different age groups as of 2010. For example, a NYC high school graduate's lifetime earnings = 3 X (mean earnings of high school graduates age 18-21) + 5 X (mean earnings of high school graduates age 20-25) + 5 X (mean earnings of high school graduates age 25-30) etc., through age 65. This approach is consistent with published methods for calculating lifetime earnings. For example, see "Education and Synthetic Work-Life Earnings Estimates" at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acs-14.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> "Beyond High School: Higher education as a growth and fiscal strategy for New York City," September, 2012, New York City Comptroller's Office, <http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2012/Higher-Education-Report-FINAL.pdf>, accessed on October 1, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> "2010\_2011\_HS\_PR\_Results\_2012\_3\_16," March 16, 2012, New York City Department of Education, <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>, accessed on June 1, 2012.

A critical impediment for students seeking access to and success in higher education is the lack of quality counseling, advising, and mentoring programs in New York City public high schools. Students need more focused support to help them navigate the complicated process of preparing for and applying to college. To ensure that students are equipped with the fundamental academic and developmental tools to succeed and thrive in a higher education environment, schools must adopt a “college-going culture” that supports the attainment of post-secondary readiness skills through an integrated program of counseling and mentoring services.

## School Counseling and Advising

School counselors are professional educators required to be certified by the New York State Education Department (SED), licensed by the New York City Department of Education (DOE), and have a master’s degree.<sup>7</sup> Their value cannot be overestimated. They help students with all aspects of college and career readiness including transcript review, course selection, and the college exploration and selection process. School counselors work with Special Education students on their Individualized Education Plans, and work with all students on the academic and personal behavioral skills needed to succeed in college. These skills include organizational, communication, and coping skills, as well as positive work habits and time management skills.

School counselors also work with students on serious life issues such as bullying and suicide. According to the Center for Disease Control 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance report, between September 2010 and December 2011, 11.7 percent of New York City high school students were bullied on school property and 11 percent were bullied electronically. Almost 12 percent of students contemplated suicide and 8.4 percent attempted suicide.<sup>8</sup> For individual crises and issues requiring outside specialists, counselors provide intervention services and therapeutic referrals.

**“The value of school counselors cannot be overestimated.”**

Concurrent responsibilities include a host of time-consuming administrative activities.<sup>9</sup> Counselors process high school applications for 9th graders, review transcripts with and provide graduation requirements sheets to 11th graders, and mail letters with information regarding the requirements and expected dates of graduation to parents of 12th graders. They maintain DOE “Graduation Requirements Binders” to track student progress, and track and record absences, lateness, and cutting, and then follow up on truant students with phone calls or letters home. Counselors also are responsible for verifying credits earned for summer, evening (extended day), and night school, and planning for transfer students, over-the-counter students<sup>10</sup>, and those returning from suspensions and the juvenile court system. During the 2009-2010 school year there were approximately 25,000 students suspended across New York City high schools.<sup>11</sup> At several large high schools more than 300 students were suspended *per school*.

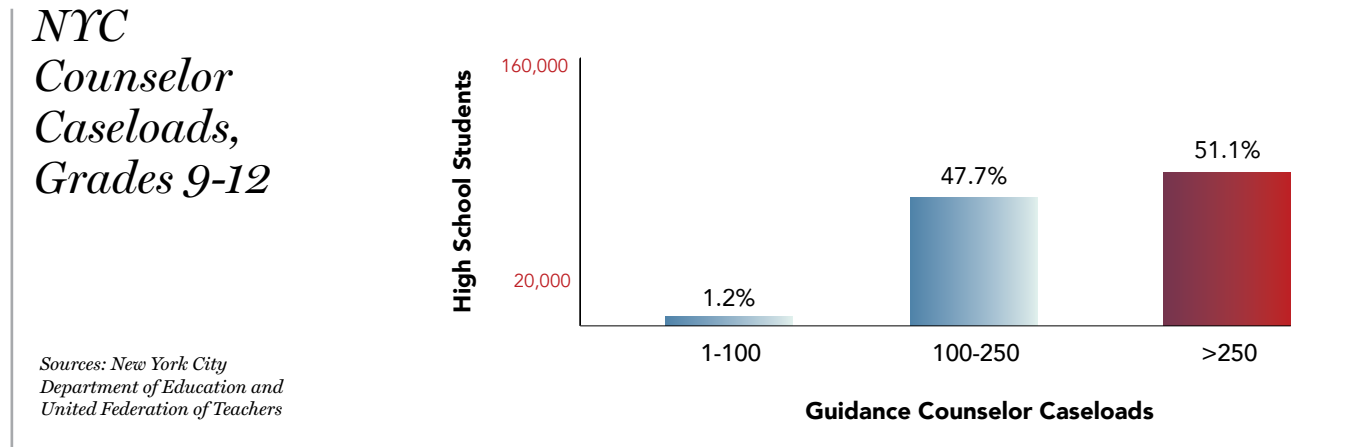
<sup>7</sup> “School Guidance Counselors in New York City Public Schools,” New York City Department of Education Office of Youth Development and United Federation of Teachers Guidance Counselor Chapter, <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/E87396C8-B32F-43A0-9309-A6F533B60B53/24834/UFTguidanceBrochure1.pdf>, accessed on July 23, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> “Youth Risk Behavior Assessment-United States, 2011,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Center for Disease Control, June 8, 2012. Harrington, William, “Developing and Managing a High School Guidance and Counseling Program: High School Guidance Counselors,” United Teachers Federation, <http://www.uft.org/files/attachments/guidance-developing-hs-program.pdf>, accessed on July 24, 2012; “Resources for Guidance Counselors,” United Federation of Teachers, <http://www.uft.org/chapters/guidance-counselors/resources>, accessed on July 25, 2012; and “Why Secondary School Counselors?” American School Counselor Association, <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=233>, accessed on July 24, 2012.

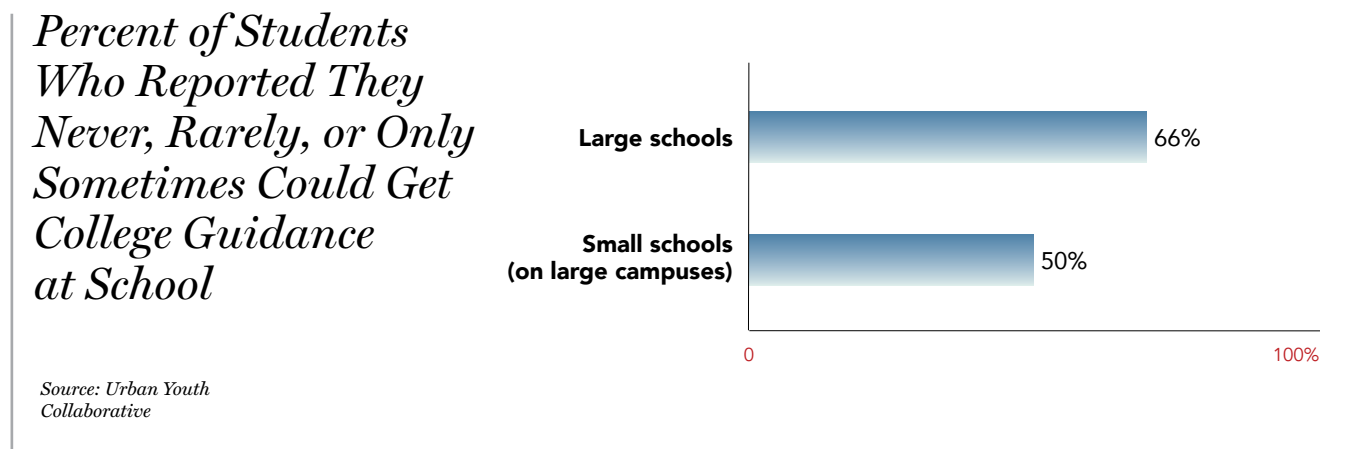
<sup>10</sup> Over-the-counter students are defined by the Department of Education as students who enroll in the New York City public school system between July and October, rather than through the spring high school admissions process.

<sup>11</sup> “Analysis of NYS Education Department, Report Card Database, 2010-2011,” New York State Education Department, March 14, 2012. Note: The 2010-2011 report did not have updated suspension data and reports 2009-2010 data.

The scope of school counselors' responsibilities is extensive, and due to large caseloads, many counselors in New York City high schools cannot provide students with the individual attention necessary to address the academic, logistical, and socio-emotional developmental needs required to pursue a college degree and succeed in a college environment. The following graph illustrates both the inconsistency of counselor caseloads across New York City high schools and the large caseloads that counselors have.<sup>12</sup> More than 50 percent of students have a student-to-counselor ratio greater than 250:1.



Students at both large and small New York City public high schools have continually expressed frustration with the inadequate amount of college guidance. In a survey of NYC high school students, the Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC) found that 66 percent of students in large schools and 50 percent of students in small schools on large campuses said they were never, rarely, or only sometimes able to get help at school when they had questions about college.<sup>13</sup>



<sup>12</sup> 2011-2012 enrollment data from "School Demographics and Accountability Snapshot," Op. Cit. College counselor data as of July 24, 2012, provided by the United Federation of Teachers. Note: This analysis is based on 416 schools for which there were enrollment and school counselor data. District 75 (Special Education Schools), District 84 (Charter Schools), and Alternative Schools are not included. Also, there is 90:1 student-to-counselor ratio cap for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), which means there are likely less counselors available for the general education pool of students. This cannot be confirmed, however, as the data do not indicate the distribution of counselors among IEP and general education populations within each school.

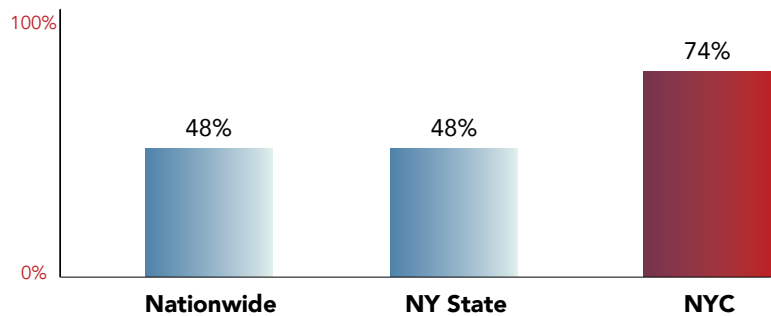
<sup>13</sup> Garvey, John, "Are New York City's Public Schools Preparing Students for Success in College," Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University, 2009. Note: The Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC) is a not-for-profit organization that brings New York City youth together to push for change through local and citywide organizing strategies. More information on the UYC can be found at <http://www.urbanyouthcollaborative.org/>.

The UYC survey is consistent with national findings. According to a 2009 U.S. Department of Education survey, public school guidance counselors provided an average of 38 minutes per year of college admissions advice per high school student.<sup>14</sup>

Nonetheless, research indicates that school assistance with college applications, financial aid applications, college essays, and field trips to universities increase the likelihood that students will attend a post-secondary institution.<sup>15</sup> Organizations like Educators for Social Responsibility say that for urban schools, ratios of 100:1 are best for supporting individual student academic planning, coordination of high school testing, delivery of guidance curriculum, ongoing postsecondary advisement, and responsiveness to the ordinary and crisis issues of high-need students.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, such guidance can mitigate the negative correlation between low socio-economic status and college enrollment.<sup>17</sup> This is particularly relevant in New York City where the average participation rate for free or reduced price lunch (a common measure of poverty) was approximately 74 percent for the 2010-2011 school year—significantly higher than New York State’s average (48 percent) or the national average (48 percent).<sup>18</sup>

*Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, 2010-2011*

*Sources: New York City Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics*



<sup>14</sup> “Creating College Ready Communities: Preparing NYC’s Precarious New Generation of College Students,” excerpts from a Forthcoming Report by the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School, presented at a public forum Thursday, June 21, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Plank, Stephen B. and Jordan, Will J., “Effects of Information, Guidance, and Actions on Postsecondary Destinations: A Study of Talent Loss,” *American Educational Research Journal*, Johns Hopkins, Winter 2001, Vol. 38, No. 4.

<sup>16</sup> “Increasing College Access through School-Based Models of Postsecondary Preparation, Planning, and Support,” Educators for Social Responsibility, January 2009, <http://esrnational.org/esr/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/increasing-college-access-hi-res.pdf>, accessed on September 5, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> New York City data from: “School Demographics and Accountability Snapshot,” *Op. Cit.* Note: 74% is based on the NYC Comptroller’s Office analysis of 365 high schools. New York State and national data from: “Table 7. Number and Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch in City, Suburban, Town, and Rural Regular Public Elementary and Secondary Schools with Membership, by State or Jurisdiction: School Year 2010-2011,” National Center for Education Statistics, April 2012, [http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/pessschools10/tables/table\\_07.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/pessschools10/tables/table_07.asp), accessed on August 6, 2012.

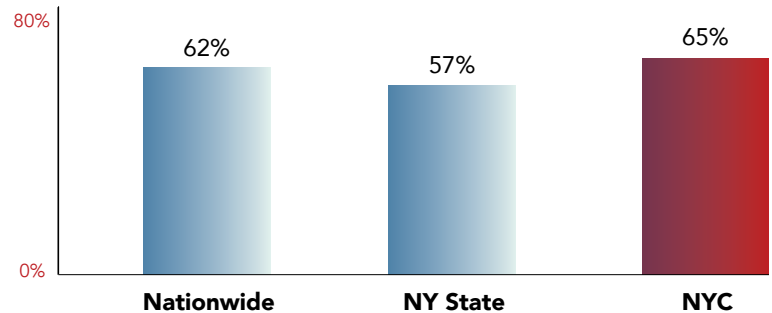


Likewise, a report from the Center for Educational Policy Research at Harvard University indicated that decreasing the student-to-counselor ratio for students who would be the first in their families to attend college increases the odds that these students will actually enroll.<sup>19</sup>

The overall level of educational attainment among New York City parents is lower than state and national averages. More New York City parents (65 percent) do not have a college degree than their statewide (57 percent) and national (62 percent) counterparts.<sup>20</sup>

### *Percent of Public and Private School Children Who Live in Households Headed by Someone Without a College Degree*

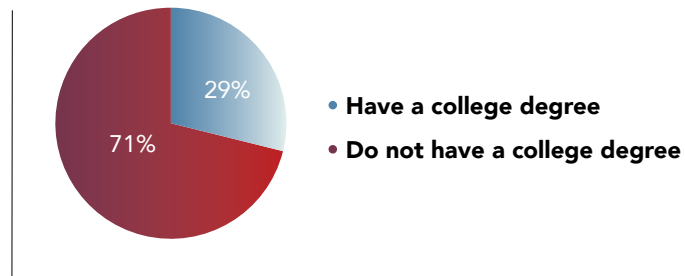
Source: KIDS COUNT, the Annie E. Casey Foundation



Moreover, among public school parents, 71 percent do not have college degrees.<sup>21</sup>

### *Educational Attainment of NYC Public School Parents*

Source: 2010 American Community Survey



<sup>19</sup> Pham, Chung and Keenan, Tracy, "Counseling and College Matriculation: Does the Availability of Counseling Affect College-Going Decisions Among Highly Qualified First-Generation College-Bound High School Graduates?" *Journal of Applied Economics and Business Research*, Center for Educational Policy Research, Harvard University, Vol. 1, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> "Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey," KIDS COUNT, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?ind=5203>, accessed on August 5, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> "2010 ACS 1-year Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)," American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_pums\\_csv\\_2010&prodType=document](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_pums_csv_2010&prodType=document), accessed on July 26, 2012.

In an effort to meet students’ needs, at times teachers, principals, and other administrative staff assist with counseling functions such as academic and college advising. Conversely, sometimes counselors are asked to take on responsibilities outside of their specialty, such as covering a class or doing lunchroom duty.<sup>22</sup> While a spirit of cooperation is commendable, it is not in anyone’s best interest for roles and responsibilities to be diluted. Teachers should be free to focus on teaching and providing students with the fundamental academic foundation for college success. Likewise, principals and other administrative staff need to concentrate on ensuring that the school functions effectively as an integrated unit.

## Recommendations

The recommendations that follow offer solutions to address counselors’ unmanageable workloads and tools to help counselors better monitor student progress and keep them on-track for high school and college success.

### 1) Significantly expand the number of school counselors

To ensure that school counselors can dedicate sufficient time to all students, the student-to-counselor ratio should be 100:1.

The projected high school enrollment for the 2012-2013 school year is 290,653.<sup>23</sup> To provide an average student-to-counselor ratio of 100:1, 2,907 counselors will be needed. Currently there are 1,295 counselors allocated to these schools.<sup>24</sup> The cost of filling the 1,612 shortfall would be approximately \$176 million, based on the average salary budgeted for guidance counselors in DOE’s FY 2013 Spending Projections.<sup>25</sup>

<i>Budget Impact of Expanded Counselor Program</i>			
<b>DOE Spending</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>+Expanded Counselor Program</b>	<b>New Total</b>
<i>DOE Operating Budget FY 2013* (000's)</i>	\$19,720,913	\$175,657	\$19,896,570
<i>FY 2013 Projected Enrollment</i>	1,130,646	1,130,646	1,130,646
<i>FY 2013 Per Pupil Spending</i>	\$17,442	\$155	\$17,598
<i>Total Per Pupil Spending for 13 years (K-12)**</i>	\$226,748	\$2,020	\$228,768
<b>Student-to-Counselor Ratio</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>+Expanded Counselor Program</b>	<b>New Total</b>
<i>Number of HS Counselors</i>	1,295	1,612	2,907
<i>HS Ratio (student to counselor)***</i>	259:1	N/A	100:1

*Sources: New York City Department of Education, New York City Office of Management and Budget \*Excludes pension and debt service. \*\*In present dollar terms, based on FY 2013 Adopted Budget Allocations. \*\*\*Based on projected enrollment for 2012-2013.*  
*NOTE: All figures are rounded to the nearest whole dollar.*

<sup>22</sup> “Resolving Workload Disputes for Some Functional Chapters,” United Federation of Teachers, June 23, 2011, <http://www.uft.org/know-your-rights/resolving-workload-disputes-some-functional-chapters>, accessed on July 25, 2012.  
<sup>23</sup> “FY13 Fair Student Funding Program Details,” New York City Department of Education, [http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/d\\_chanc\\_oper/budget/dbor/allocationmemo/fy12\\_13/FY13\\_PDF/SAM01\\_3\\_SBD.html](http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/d_chanc_oper/budget/dbor/allocationmemo/fy12_13/FY13_PDF/SAM01_3_SBD.html), accessed on July 27, 2012. Note: Projected enrollments were obtained from the field “Register, October 31, 2012 Projected.” For schools coded as having a grade span of “9-12,” the absolute value of the corresponding cell was used. For schools coded as having a grade span of “6-12,” the absolute value of the corresponding cell was multiplied by (4/7) to approximate enrollment for grades 9-12 only.  
<sup>24</sup> College counselor data as of July 24, 2012, provided by the United Federation of Teachers. Note: This analysis is based on 416 schools for which there were enrollment and school counselor data. District 75 (Special Education Schools), District 84 (Charter Schools), and Alternative Schools are not included.  
<sup>25</sup> “The City of New York Adopted Budget FY 2013,” New York City Office of Management and Budget, [http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/ss6\\_12.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/ss6_12.pdf). Note: The average salary budgeted for guidance counselors is \$82,000. The starting salary for new counselors is \$42,000, and the top of the range is \$103,000. Including 33% for fringe benefits (FICA, health insurance, pension, etc.), the cost of hiring the additional counselors could range from \$90 million-\$221 million. The \$176 million cited in the report is based on the average salary.





For an additional \$2,020 per pupil, or less than one percent of current spending, all high school students could receive individual counseling on a regular basis.

### ***College Counselors and Guidance Counselors***

Each principal, and the larger school community, including the School Leadership Team, should determine how to best utilize its additional counseling resources.<sup>26</sup> However, it is strongly recommended that schools consider separating guidance and college counseling responsibilities to better provide students with the specialized attention they need to prepare for their academic and career futures.

Dedicated college counselors would focus exclusively on creating a college-going culture in their respective schools and matching students with an appropriate institution of higher education. Ideally they would have access to specific professional development opportunities on topics such as the college admissions process, financial aid fundamentals, and working with special needs populations on their college plans. College counselors would prioritize cultivating long-term relationships with colleges and universities to increase opportunities for interested students. Individual services to students would include learning their academic strengths and career aspirations, ensuring they effectively navigate the college application process and meet deadlines, helping them complete financial aid forms, and providing them support for test preparation and essay writing.

Traditional guidance counselors would then have more time to concentrate on providing academic and socio-emotional support, as well as to work with the college counselors to help students learn coping skills to aid them in their transition to higher education. The counseling team would form, along with the help of higher education mentoring programs and non-profit external partners, an integrated and comprehensive model to support college access for students in all New York City high schools.

Also of note, it is important that the counseling teams work with students as early as the ninth grade and follow the same cohort through high school graduation, a recommendation shared by the Urban Youth Collaborative.<sup>27</sup> Continuity is critical to ensure that the bond and trust that students develop with their counselors remain intact throughout their high school experience.

<sup>26</sup> School Leadership Teams (SLTs) are a vehicle for developing school-based educational policies and ensuring that resources are aligned to implement those policies. Mandatory members include the school's principal, the Parent Association/Parent-Teacher Association (PA/PTA) President, and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Chapter Leader, or their designees. For more information see "Chancellor's Regulations, A-655," New York City Department of Education, <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/381F4607-7841-4D28-B7D5-0F30DDB77DFA/82007/A655FINAL1.pdf>, accessed on July 17, 2012.

<sup>27</sup> "Get Us to College!" attachment to a letter to New York City Comptroller John Liu, from the Urban Youth Collaborative, dated May 16th, 2012.

*Suggested Roles and Responsibilities*

College Counselor Responsibilities	Guidance Counselor Responsibilities	Benefits of Coordination
<b>INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC PLANNING &amp; SUPPORT</b>		
Learning students' academic and career aspirations	Academic advising	All academic graduation and college requirements are monitored and accounted for.
College planning timeline	Monitor academic progress	
Monitor college progress	Regents exams	
Standardized test preparation	Mandated counseling (IEPs)*	
Assistance with essays	Address needs of over-age, under-credited students	
<b>INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENTAL &amp; EMOTIONAL SUPPORT</b>		
Explore range of post-secondary options	Crisis intervention	Students have a healthy, positive high school experience and can identify the most appropriate post-secondary environment given their needs, interests, and ambitions.
	Therapeutic referrals	
<b>GROUP-LEVEL SUPPORT</b>		
Field trips to colleges and universities	Welcome student orientation	The entire community of students, parents, and teachers understands what is required for students to succeed in high school and beyond.
Class presentations on the college-planning process tailored to different grade levels	Graduation requirement presentations to classrooms, teachers, and parent associations	
College night for parents	Skill-building (i.e. coping, time management, financial literacy)	
College affordability information for students and parents	Teen issues (i.e. bullying, suicide prevention, substance abuse)	
	Assist in extracurricular and social functions	
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		
Assistance with financial aid forms & applications	High school application processing system for 9th graders	There is a simplified process to monitor high school progress and college preparation.
Recommendation letters	Maintain New York City Department of Education Graduation Requirements Binder	
Miscellaneous paperwork as needed (housing forms)	Collaborate with other school support personnel to track and record absences, lateness, and cutting	
	Verify earned credit for summer, evening (extended day), and night school	
	Planning for transfer students, over-the-counter students, and those returning from suspensions	

Sources: American School Counselor Association and United Federation of Teachers  
 \*Individualized Education Program, typically for students with special needs.



## 2) Create early intervention systems to help students stay on-track to college

Early intervention and support can be crucial for keeping students on-track for both graduation and a college-ready trajectory. At many colleges, including those in the City University of New York (CUNY) system, all students pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree must satisfy the reading, writing, and mathematics basic skills requirements.<sup>28</sup> The current systems for tracking student progress include the "Graduation Requirements Binder" and student transcripts. However, there are effective programs and tools that should be considered to help counselors and teachers ensure that low-performing students receive the necessary supports to earn their high school degrees and gain the skills necessary for post-secondary success. Following are three promising ideas:

### I. Talent Development Secondary

The *Talent Development Secondary* initiative, developed by Johns Hopkins University, is now implemented in more than 125 schools throughout the U.S.<sup>29</sup> The program pays particular attention to students in middle school and 9th grade when they are most in danger of dropping out or falling far behind in school. The initiative has identified a series of Early Warning Indicators (poor attendance, poor behavior, and course failure in English or math) which allow counselors and teachers the opportunity to identify and respond appropriately to students signaling they need extra support. The program creates an integrated team of inter-disciplinary teachers who provide academic support, such as a skill-building curriculum in math and reading comprehension, along with enhanced guidance services designed to keep students on-track for college.

*Talent Development Secondary* is currently working in partnership with City Year and Communities in Schools, two other non-profit organizations, as part of the *Diplomas Now* program in two struggling large New York City high schools: Newtown High School in Queens and Sheepshead Bay High School in Brooklyn. *Diplomas Now* pairs evidence-based comprehensive school improvement with national service teams to provide tutoring, mentoring, monitoring, and engagement activities along with integrated support services for students most at-risk of falling behind or dropping out.<sup>30</sup> The director of communications for *Talent Development Secondary* reports that the program had also been implemented at two additional Brooklyn high schools (George Westinghouse and Abraham Lincoln), but were eliminated by the principals due to budget constraints.<sup>31</sup>

**"The DOE should develop a College Readiness Index."**

### II. College Readiness Index

The Urban Youth Collaborative has advocated for an early warning system so that all high school students know how many credits they have, whether they are on-track for graduation, and what classes they should take to prepare for college.<sup>32</sup> In his report for the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, John Garvey expands on the UYC recommendation and suggests that the DOE develop a "College Readiness Index" so that students, parents, and school staff would have a practical way of assessing how well the courses students take and the grades they earn keep them on the pathway to college.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> "The CUNY Assessment Testing Program: Policies and Procedures," the City University of New York, [http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/prospective/cwe2/testing\\_skills.cfm](http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/prospective/cwe2/testing_skills.cfm), accessed on July 24, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> "Early Warning Indicator Systems," Johns Hopkins University's School of Education, <http://www.tdschools.org/about-talent-development-secondary/>, accessed on June 1, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> "What We Do," Diplomas Now, <http://www.diplomasnow.org/how-we-work/>, accessed on August 6, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Conversation with Mary Maushard, Director of Communications, Talent Development, Johns Hopkins University, August 6, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Urban Youth Collaborative, Op. Cit.

<sup>33</sup> Garvey, Op. Cit.



*Sample College Readiness Index*

➔ <i>Very well prepared</i>	Students who take and pass more than a full load of expected courses, earn grades of 90 or better, and obtain SAT scores of 550 or over on each test.
➞ <i>Moderately well prepared</i>	Students who take and pass a full load of expected courses, earn grades of 85 or better, and obtain SAT scores of 500 or over on each test.
➞ <i>Minimally prepared</i>	Students who take and pass 90 percent of expected courses, earn grades of 75 or better, and obtain SAT scores of 480 or over on each test.
➞ <i>Relatively underprepared</i>	Students who take and pass 75 percent of expected courses, earn grades of 65 or better, and are determined to need only one remedial course.
➞ <i>Very underprepared</i>	Students who take and pass 75 percent of expected courses, earn grades below 65, and are determined to need two or more remedial courses.

*Source: Adapted from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University*

*NOTE: A college readiness index should not be interpreted as being equivalent to the likelihood of admission to a particular college. Admissions decisions properly take into account other information regarding applications (extracurricular activities, personal circumstances, recommendations, etc.).*

**III. Reformat and standardize high school transcripts**

A third recommendation would be reformatted and standardized high school transcripts so that they clearly and simply illustrate a student’s progress towards high school graduation and college preparation. Currently, high school transcripts differ—sometimes dramatically—from school to school. It is an unwieldy and difficult process to measure how students’ academic records align with their trajectory toward graduation, let alone document their college-readiness skills. Streamlined and transparent transcripts would provide educators, students, and parents with a better understanding of student progress.

**Access and Mentoring Programs**

Access and mentoring programs supplement the counseling experience by providing opportunities for students to hone academic skills, experience college life, and engage with college students. Such exposure contributes to the development of a college-going culture and supports students in believing that they can attend and succeed in college.

**3) Expand collaborative programs with CUNY and other area colleges**

Collaborative initiatives among the DOE, CUNY, and other local institutions of higher learning are an effective means to provide college access program opportunities for New York City students. Each high school should have a “sister college” in the New York City area and coordinate several collaborative programs during the school year.

All high schools should have early college preparation and orientation programs beginning in 9th grade and continuing through senior year. By utilizing local public and private colleges and universities, students can be exposed to a world beyond high school and provided with opportunities to talk with undergraduates, faculty, staff, and administrators. This is especially important for students considering enrolling in one of the two-year CUNY colleges where the attrition rate is particularly high and the need for enhanced support for incoming freshmen most acute.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> “New Efforts Speed Remedial Students’ Progress,” *CUNY Matters*, the City University of New York, December 2, 2011, <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2011/12/02/new-efforts-speed-remedial-students%E2%80%99-progress/> accessed on July 26, 2012.



There are a number of important programs that already connect CUNY with New York City public schools, but these programs are not available to enough students, including 9th and 10th graders. For example, *College Now* provides college credit courses for 11th and 12th graders, and college preparatory classes for 9th and 10th graders. It is CUNY's largest collaborative program, but during the 2010-2011 school year it reached less than seven percent of the approximately 300,000 high school students.<sup>35</sup> Given the large numbers of New York City public school graduates who go on to enroll in a CUNY college, every effort should be made to expand the collaborations between the DOE and CUNY.

*NYC Public High School Students Served by CUNY Collaborative Programs 2010-2011*

Program	Grades Covered	# Students Served	% Students Served
College Now	9th-12th	19,641	6.4%
Early College Initiative	9th-12th	5,235	1.7%
At Home in College	12th	1,041	1.7%
NYC Science and Engineering Fair	9th-12th	358	0.1%
<b>Any Collaborative Program*</b>		<b>26,275</b>	<b>8.6%</b>

Source: City University of New York

\*Students participating in multiple programs during a given academic year are counted once.

**4) Support and promote young mentors and role models**

Undergraduates, having recently completed the college application process, are well-positioned to work one-on-one with students who need help with basic coursework, standardized test preparation, and college application essays. Undergraduates can also serve as a resource to college counselors and can assist with group-level activities including information sessions and field trips to colleges and universities.

New York City-based colleges and universities do offer opportunities for undergraduates to mentor and tutor in public high schools. For instance, NYU Steinhardt students have provided college preparation and mentoring services to first-generation, immigrant 11th graders at Bronx International, Louis D. Brandeis, and Manhattan Theater Lab high schools through the Adolescent Post-Secondary Education Exchange Program.<sup>36</sup>

Both Steinhardt and Columbia coordinate variations of an *Upward Bound* program.<sup>37</sup> At Columbia, student volunteers target underachieving 9th and 10th graders and provide year-round academic

<sup>35</sup> "NYC Public High School Students Served by CUNY Collaborative Programs, 2010-11 and 2011-12 Academic Years," CUNY Collaborative Programs Research and Evaluation, June 20, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> "Adolescent Post-Secondary Education Exchange Program: Program Description," NYU Steinhardt Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/apex/program>, accessed on June 19, 2012.

<sup>37</sup> "Upward Bound Program," U.S. Department of Education, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>, accessed on July 25, 2012. Note: Upward Bound is a United States Department of Education program that provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree.



support throughout high school until college entrance.<sup>38</sup> However, there is an opportunity to do more. Every day there are nearly 400,000 undergraduate students attending college in the five boroughs.<sup>39</sup> These students are an underutilized resource that can be tapped to expand one-on-one mentoring programs.

Specifically, there may be an opportunity to leverage the approximately 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students receiving Federal Work-Study (FWS) grants across the City.<sup>40</sup> *Public Service Corps* (PSC) is a locally administered FWS program which creates paid public sector internships for college students.<sup>41</sup> Currently, the only education-related internship opportunity offered is *America Reads*, a national literacy program that targets students in pre-school and day care.<sup>42</sup> It would be worthwhile for DOE to explore the potential for mentoring internship positions in New York City high schools through PSC.

Another approach to consider is creating a City Work-Study program. At least six states, not including New York, provide state work-study programs in addition to FWS.<sup>43</sup> The programs vary, but generally they provide part-time positions (15-20 hours per week) that allow college students the opportunity to earn up to \$5,000 during an academic year. For approximately \$5.5 million per academic year, New York City could create 1,000 City Work-Study positions which would support not only high school students' college-going efforts, but also college students' efforts to pay for higher education.<sup>44</sup>

**“Undergraduate students are an underutilized resource that can be tapped to expand one-on-one mentoring programs.”**

Likewise, older high school students can be important resources for their younger peers. There is an added benefit in that young people are often able to form special bonds with those from their own age cohort—bonds that sometimes are far more difficult to develop across generational lines. Student Success Centers (SSCs) are being piloted in three large high school campuses in New York City (Bushwick, Franklin K. Lane, and Taft). The Centers are resource rooms for students who have been trained by college counseling staff to assist their peers in navigating the college preparation process, including taking course prerequisites, completing college applications correctly, and accessing financial aid.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>38</sup> “Programs,” Double Discovery Center at Columbia University, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/college/ddc/programs.html>, accessed on June 19, 2012.

<sup>39</sup> “New York State Data for 2- and 4-Year Public and Private Colleges,” The Chronicle of Higher Education College Completion, <http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/>, accessed on July 20, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> “Federal Work-Study Program,” U.S. Department of Education, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fws/index.html>, accessed on July 25, 2012; and “Federal Work Study Program,” Corporation for National and Community Service, [http://www.nationalservice.gov/for\\_organizations/highered/fws.asp](http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/highered/fws.asp), accessed on July 26, 2012. Note: The FWS program provides funds for part-time employment to help needy students finance the costs of postsecondary education.

<sup>41</sup> “PSC-Types of Internships,” New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services, [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/html/employment/psc\\_internships.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/html/employment/psc_internships.shtml), accessed on July 25, 2012.

<sup>42</sup> Public Service Corps, “Internships at NYC Agencies,” [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/downloads/pdf/misc/psc\\_placements.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/downloads/pdf/misc/psc_placements.pdf), accessed on July 25, 2012.

<sup>43</sup> “State-Sponsored Work Study Programs,” studentaid.com, <http://www.studentaid.com/Paying/State-Work-Study>, accessed on July 27, 2012.

<sup>44</sup> \$5.5 million = hourly wage (\$8.50) x hours per week (20) x weeks in post-secondary academic year (32) x number of interns (1,000). The calculation excludes potential overhead and administrative costs.

<sup>45</sup> “Student Success Centers,” College Access: Research & Action, <http://caranyc.org/programs/student-success-centers/>, accessed on August 6, 2012.

Student Success Centers are an innovative and cost-effective approach to supplement dedicated college counselors and provide increased access and support for more students to take control of their educational futures. The SSCs are estimated to cost between \$150,000 and \$200,000 per school.<sup>46</sup> For \$1.5-\$2 million the City could expand the pilot program and put SSCs on another ten high school campuses. Expanding the program would be worthwhile as currently only a limited number of high school students on SSC campuses stand to benefit.

### 5) Support summer programs that assist college-bound high school graduates

Finally, the DOE should address a disturbing trend: low-income high school graduates are accepted to college but fail to matriculate in the fall.<sup>47</sup> This issue was highlighted in the Big Picture Longitudinal Study (BPLS), in which 50 urban high schools tracked 500 graduates.<sup>48</sup> The high school graduates were predominantly low-income, non-white, and the first to attend college in their families. Participating schools employed transition counselors who helped students with the application process such that 95 to 100 percent of tracked students were accepted into a college. Still, despite the additional support, the BPLS found that only 70 percent of accepted students actually were enrolled in any college in the September after graduation.

**“The DOE should address a disturbing trend: low-income high school students are accepted to college but fail to matriculate.”**

There are summer programs that guide students through the final stages of college enrollment including filing financial aid and housing forms and registering for classes. Other programs provide academic tutoring to help students avoid future remediation. A senior research associate at Teachers College noted that such programs can also improve the odds of student success in college by providing an important “head start.” Students gain what is called “college knowledge” by working with peer mentors to gain comfort with the college environment and begin to see themselves as college students.<sup>49</sup>

One such example is *Bridge to College*, a program launched in 2011 through collaboration among College Access: Research & Action (CARA), Urban Assembly, and CUNY.<sup>50</sup> The program is designed to support first-generation college-bound students enrolling in college by working with graduating

<sup>46</sup> Testimony of Maria C. Fernandez, Executive Director of the Urban Youth Collaborative, to New York City Comptroller John C. Liu, May 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Center for New York City Affairs at the New School, Op. Cit.

<sup>48</sup> Arnold, Karen; Fleming, Shezwe; DeAnda, Mario; Castleman, Benjamin; and Wartman, Katherine Lynk, “The Summer Flood: The Invisible Gap Among Low-Income Students,” *Thought & Action*, National Education Association, Fall 2009, <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/TA-09SummerFlood.pdf>, accessed on August 7, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Jacobs, Joanne, “A Summer Bridge to College,” Hechinger Report blog, Community College Spotlight, <http://communitycollegespotlight.org/tags/summer-bridge/>, accessed on May 17, 2012.

<sup>50</sup> “Bridge to College,” College Access: Research & Action, <http://caranyc.org/programs/bridge-to-college/>, accessed on July 31, 2012, and “Bridge to College: A Program of The Urban Assembly, CUNY At Home in College, and CARA,” College Access: Research & Action, <http://caranyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/CoreComponents.pdf>, accessed on July 30, 2012.

high school seniors as they navigate the obstacles that arise during the summer. Each participating high school pairs a “College Coach” with an adult supervisor. Ideally, the Coach is an alumnus of the school and is currently enrolled in college, and the supervisor is the college counselor. Both Coaches and supervisors receive program training. College Coaches start in the spring, making presentations and leading workshops in schools. Over the summer College Coaches conduct outreach to their individual caseloads of graduated high school seniors through a variety of methods including in-person meetings, phone check-ins, Facebook, and e-mail exchanges.

In 2012, *Bridge to College* worked with 80 schools, or one-fifth of the City’s public high schools.<sup>51</sup> On average, each school had one College Coach who worked with 50-75 students for 10-15 hours per week. The DOE has taken a first step in expanding the scope of the program by funding an independent program evaluation. It is important that the DOE use the knowledge gained to strengthen and develop the program to reach as many New York City high school students as possible. College Coaches earn a \$2,000 stipend for the summer. For \$800,000, plus training and administrative costs, New York City could hire 400 College Coaches and serve most New York City public high schools. Alternatively, *Bridge to College* could tie funding for the positions to a City Work-Study program, as described previously.

## Conclusion

For New York City students to thrive in a college environment they must be prepared to handle the intellectual, logistical, and socio-emotional challenges that arise when pursuing a higher education. A strong academic foundation is the pre-requisite to college success; students must have a quality education that prepares them for post-secondary coursework. A strong academic foundation, however, is only one piece of the puzzle. To increase the number of New York City students both enrolling in and completing college, students need enhanced advising and guidance that address both the developmental and practical components of college planning and preparation. A comprehensive counseling program with dedicated college and guidance counseling can more effectively support students in this important process. Access and mentoring initiatives can further complement and strengthen the counseling program. These components are essential to creating a college-going culture in schools and instilling in students the belief that they can attend and succeed in higher education and beyond.

**“For \$800,000, New York City could hire 400 College Coaches and serve most New York City public high schools.”**

<sup>51</sup> Center for New York City Affairs at the New School, Op. Cit.





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