School Counselors Matter in Louisiana

School counselors can play a critical role in making sure that students receive opportunities to have safe, enriching experiences in and out of school, and in helping to prepare students for postsecondary success. Our school counselors fact sheet paints a clear picture: In too many states, students — particularly students of color and students from low-income families — do not have enough access to school counselors. But what about Louisiana specifically?

There are not enough school counselors. They are allocated equitably across high schools, but students from low-income families, when looking across all schools, are being shortchanged.

ADEQUACY: ARE THERE ENOUGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS?

The American School Counselor Association recommends that schools maintain a ratio of 250 students per school counselor. Louisiana does not meet this benchmark.

- Across all schools, the average student-to-school-counselor ratio is 515:1.
- Across all schools, 1 in 5 students — more than 140,000 children — do not have access to a school counselor at all, and nearly 90,000 of those students do not even have access to other school support staff, such as school psychologists or social workers.
- Across high schools, the average student-to-school-counselor ratio is 359:1.
- Across high schools, 8 percent of students are enrolled in a school where there is a sufficient amount of school counselors. This means there are about 163,000 students who are enrolled in a school without enough school counselors.

EQUITY: ARE STUDENTS OF COLOR AND STUDENTS FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES GETTING THEIR FAIR SHARE?

When looking across all schools, Louisiana is shortchanging its students from low-income families by providing fewer school counselors in schools with more students from low-income families than in schools with fewer of them. However, Louisiana is not shortchanging students of color or students from low-income families in high school.

Average Students per School Counselor, by School Characteristics, 2015 – 16

Average Students per School Counselor, in High Schools, by School Characteristics, 2015 – 16

Source: The Education Trust analysis of data from the 2015–16 Civil Rights Data Collection and the 2015–16 Common Core of Data.