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Characteristics of an Effective Principal-Counselor Relationship*

1. Open communication that provides multiple opportunities for input to decision making
2. Opportunities to share ideas on teaching, learning and schoolwide educational initiatives
3. Sharing information about needs within the school and the community
4. School counselor participation on school leadership teams
5. Joint responsibility in the development of goals and metrics that indicate success
6. Mutual trust between the principal and school counselors
7. A shared vision of what is meant by student success
8. Mutual respect between the principal and school counselors
9. Shared decision making on initiatives that impact student success
10. A collective commitment to equity and opportunity

* The questions on the national survey of principals and counselors, including the characteristics of effective principal-counselor relationships, were suggested by experts at the College Board, ASCA and NASSP. While this is not an exhaustive list and there may be additional important characteristics of these relationships, all 10 presented here were endorsed by both principals and counselors as important characteristics of an effective principal-counselor relationship.

Taking One Step Forward: A Self-Assessment Tool

This chart can help teams become self-reflective practitioners. You can use it to assess the degree to which the areas in need of work affect the team's ability to address issues of school reform, solve problems, engage in strategic planning, introduce new initiatives, handle resistance to change, and handle crises and other things that are critical points in helping a school move forward.

Complete the form by having the principal and counselor(s) rate each characteristic on level of importance from 1 - 5 with 1 being "not important" and 5 being "very important." Next, do the same for the extent to which the characteristic is present in your relationship, with 1 being "not present" and 5 being "extremely present." After rating each characteristic, note the difference between level of importance and level of presence in the "Gap" column. If the relationship is not at its best, the principal or counselor needs to approach her or his counterpart to begin the process of moving forward. Having concrete examples from *Finding a Way* can help. Many people will find themselves in the stories in this publication or could see the potential of what they could be in the stories. It may be a way to start the conversation — "Which teams are we most like?"

PRINCIPAL			Characteristics of an Effective Relationship	COUNSELOR		
Importance	Presence	Gap		Importance	Presence	Gap
			1. Open communication that provides multiple opportunities for input to decision making			
			2. Opportunities to share ideas on teaching, learning and schoolwide educational initiatives			
			3. Sharing information about needs within the school and community			
			4. School Counselor participation on school leadership team			
			5. Joint responsibility in the development of goals and metrics that indicate success			
			6. Mutual trust between the principal and school counselors			
			7. A shared vision on what is meant by student success			
			8. Mutual respect between the principal and school counselors			
			9. Shared decision making on initiatives that impact student success			
			10. A collective commitment to equity and opportunity			

Based on our initial conversation about the identified gap(s), we agree to work to improve the following characteristics: