

2.3 Principal-School Counselor Scenarios

Instructions

1. Now that you have analyzed your communication practices, try brainstorming how effective communication can help you resolve a pressing issue at your school. A sample, based on a situation at a real school, has been provided, along with discussion questions. Following the example, think of a situation that you can work on collaboratively, using the questions provided as well as others that pertain to the situation.
2. As situations arise — especially ones that you are having difficulty solving — use this method to analyze, discuss and create solutions.
3. We recommend that you use an outside facilitator for the first discussion. After that, select a school counselor or principal to act as facilitator, preferably on a rotating basis.

Time: 1–2 hours for discussion.

Sample Scenario

The Situation	
It is the first week of second semester of the school year, and the principal has held one meeting with the counseling department. That meeting was about the opening of school processes and how to handle schedule changes.	The principal is a hands-on manager who holds frequent meetings with his administrative staff but calls additional staff/department meetings on an “as needs basis.” The administrative meetings are scheduled for every Monday morning before students arrive and are seldom cancelled. The counselors view this as a direct slighting of them as professionals and discounting of their contributions to the school because the monthly scheduled meetings that were set up for their meetings with the principal are almost always cancelled.

Discussion Questions	
How would you characterize this relationship?	
What would be the indicators that solution finding is characterized by open communication, opportunities for both parties to have input, and that the goal was making student benefits the primary goal?	
What critical student and community information must be addressed in reaching an educationally just and sound solution?	
What information do the counselors need to share with the principal in order to improve communication?	
What does the principal need the counselors to understand about her or his time limitations/priorities?	