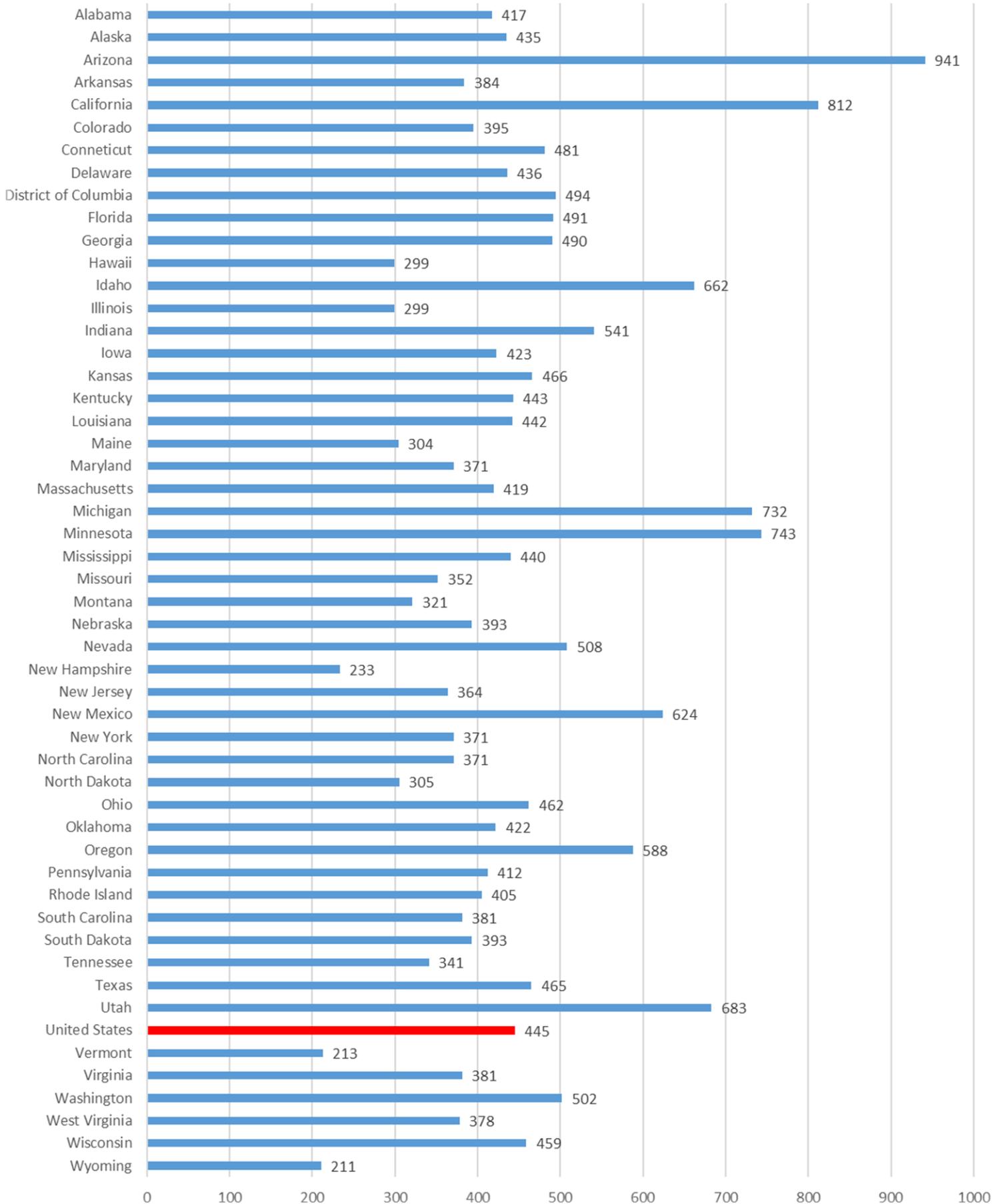


## K12 Public School Student to Counselor Ratios: 2013-2014



## School Counselors Contribute to College Access and Success

A growing body of research provides hard evidence to support what NACAC members already know: Counselors, given the time and resources necessary to effectively do their jobs, play an essential part in ensuring students' success throughout K-12 education and beyond. As the postsecondary aspirations of high school students continue to rise,<sup>1</sup> and as college degrees become the new prerequisite to economic self-sufficiency, it is incumbent upon administrators, policymakers, and the public to recognize the contributions of, and challenges facing, school counselors.

*"Research clearly shows that counselors, when consistently and frequently available and allowed to provide direct services to students and parents, can be a highly effective group of professionals who positively impact students' aspirations, achievements and financial aid knowledge... [I]mproving counseling would have a significant impact on college access for low-income, rural and urban students as well as students of color."<sup>2</sup>*

Unfortunately, counselors, especially those serving at-risk students, are often stretched too thin, taught too little, and given too few resources, greatly limiting their abilities to help students realize their full educational potential.

### National Student-to-Counselor Ratio 2014-2015

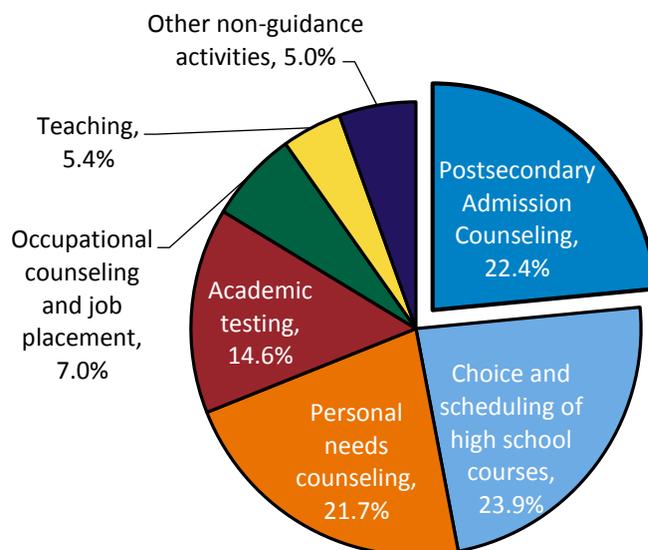
**476:1**

This ratio is nearly twice the ratio of 250:1 recommended by the American School Counselor Association.

According to NACAC research, counselors consistently rank their top two priorities as helping students with their academic achievement in high school and helping students plan and prepare for postsecondary education. In 2015, only 37 percent of public high schools required counselors responsible for college counseling to participate in professional development related to postsecondary counseling (compared to 54.4 percent for private school counselors). Furthermore, of the public schools that do require this professional development, only 41 percent cover all the costs of such training.<sup>2</sup>

Counselors in public schools reported spending only 22.4 percent of their time on postsecondary admission counseling, compared to 55 percent for private school counselors. Counselors at higher income schools and those at schools with smaller enrollments also spent more time on postsecondary counseling compared to their counterparts at lower-income and larger schools. Between heavy caseloads, time-consuming administrative responsibilities, and limited training opportunities, it is no wonder that a Public Agenda report<sup>4</sup> declared counselors "overstretched." To prepare all students for college, improve the college enrollment rates of underrepresented populations, and help advance the United States' place in the global economy, we must recognize the unique and vital contribution of school counselors and ensure that they receive the support they need to, in turn, support our students as they transition to postsecondary education.

### Public secondary counselors spend only about a quarter of their time on postsecondary admission counseling<sup>4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Chen, Xianglei, et al. (2010). Postsecondary Expectations and Plans for the High School Senior Class of 2003-2004. NCES.

<sup>2</sup> Clinedinst, M., Hawkins, D. (2015). State of College Admission 2015. NACAC.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, Jean, et al. (2010). Can I Get a Little Advice Here? Public Agenda.