Policy Briefs for School-based Counseling: Purpose, Practice, and a Call to Action

Michael S. Trevisan
Washington State University

Policy briefs are short documents that argue for a policy intervention to address a societal problem and are informed by policy research. These documents are used extensively in policy making circles in the U.S., though not widely known by the scholarly community. The argument is made in this paper that policy briefs are a logical extension of policy research promoted by ISPRESC. This paper is a call to action for this work. The *Journal of School-Based Counseling Policy and Evaluation* will publish policy briefs in school-based counseling and house them on the journal website. This paper provides recommendations for the development of policy briefs, reviews three school-based counseling policy briefs, and provides submission guidelines and template for writing policy briefs developed by the editorial team. It is hoped that individuals interested in school-based counseling policy formation will consider this call to action for writing policy briefs and develop and submit policy brief manuscripts for possible publication.

Keywords: policy briefs, school-based counseling, policy makers

In recent years, several prominent scholars in school-based counseling have made the case for policy research as a compelling next step in the research enterprise of school-based counseling worldwide (Aluede et al., 2017; Sink et al., 2024). Much of the rationale for this argument is that policy research can provide policymakers with data about the most effective programs and practices, and thus, justification for policies that foster the development and implementation of these programs. Policies can signal the benefits and anticipated outcomes that can be expected from these programs. Articulated as a social good, the policy argument further justifies the expenditure of public tax revenue to finance implementation. While policy research in school-based counseling is in its infancy (Rallis & Carey, 2017), policy research holds a good deal of promise as a component in the argument for the adoption and expansion of effective school-based counseling programs throughout the world. Thus, policy research has garnered sustained attention by much of the international scholarly community in school-based counseling.

There has been considerable momentum for the development and implementation of school-based counseling programs throughout the world. The most recent accounting documents 90 countries with some form of school-based counseling and several more in serious policy deliberations about expansion of existing programs or new implementation (Harris, 2013). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic raised concerns for the mental health and well-being of children and youth across the world and has put school-based counseling in the spotlight. Both the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2020) and the United Nations (UN, 2021) called for broad, integrated mental health support across the health, social service, and education sectors. And in two national reports in the U.S., both the Surgeon General (Murthy,

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Michael S. Trevisan, Washington State University, College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences, PO Box 642114, Pullman, WA, 99164. Email: trevisan@wsu.edu.

2021) and Secretary of Education (Cardona, 2021) called for an increase in the number of school counselors across the country. Both advocated for school counselor to student ratios long recommended by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2021) as well as a reduction in non-school counseling administrative tasks and activities. This type of policy recommendation for school counselors is largely unprecedented in the U.S., particularly in recent years where education reform policies, focused on teaching and learning processes, have dominated the K-12 education policy landscape. (Trevisan, 2023; 2024). Given the aforementioned, the timing could be ideal for research work to coalesce around the idea of evidence-based policy formation for school-based counseling.

While the importance and priority of sound policy research remains central, effective use of policy research often requires the translation of technical findings into information that can be grasped by a wide range of policy advocates and policy makers. To this end, there are policy-oriented strategies that can be used to encapsulate a policy argument and do so in an accessible manner for individuals that don't have content knowledge of, in this case, school-based counseling but are connected to policy formation. While these strategies cannot replace sound policy research – in fact, policy research is central to their development and use, they do offer additional means to move toward the adoption of sound school-based counseling policy. One such strategy is the development and use of *policy briefs*. Policy briefs are short documents written for a particular audience, usually legislators and other policymakers, that advocate for a particular policy, substantiated by research evidence. Policy briefs are written in a way that provides key information needed for policy formation, presented in a nontechnical manner. These documents are developed and used across policy making circles, often during legislative sessions when policy choices are being proposed. While largely untapped as a tool for promoting policy in school-based counseling, policy briefs have the potential to influence policy in positive ways and thus, the development of policy briefs is a logical and potentially fruitful expansion of the work of ISPRESC.

This paper is a call to action to the school-based counseling community to develop policy briefs as a means to move the development and implementation of school-based counseling programs and practices forward. The ISPRESC executive council and JSCPE editorial staff encourage interested researchers, graduate students, policy makers, and practitioners to submit their policy brief manuscript to JSCPE for possible publication. An infrastructure is now in place housed within JSCPE to receive and review policy brief manuscripts and publish those that are accepted. To foster consideration and prepare interested writers, this paper provides background information on developing a policy brief along with a review of three school-based counseling policy briefs found through an internet search. JSCPE official submission guidelines for developing and submitting a policy brief manuscript are provided. A JSCPE policy brief template is available to support the writing of policy brief documents and is included in this paper. Recommendations are offered for crafting effective policy brief documents for school-based counseling.

Purpose and Structure of Effective Policy Briefs

In academic contexts, policy briefs are typically seen not as a scientific method in themselves, but as a means of translating scientific knowledge into actionable recommendations. As such, they are commonly found in guides, technical documents, and practice-oriented resources, rather than in peer-reviewed academic journals. While peer-reviewed literature on writing policy briefs is

limited, there exists a wealth of high-quality practice-based guidance in the form of open-access manuals, training modules, and institutional publications.

An internet search for articles that detail how to write a policy brief reveals only two papers in the peer-reviewed literature. The two that were found easily are a bit dated, and both are applied to the health field (i.e., DeMarco & Adams, 2014; Wong et al., 2016). The internet search also found PowerPoint presentations that were developed by technical assistance centers (e.g., International Development Research Centre – Canada, https://idrc-crdi.ca/en/about-idrc) which can be downloaded. There are also a small number of online presentations and YouTube videos for writing policy briefs. With a google search, "developing a policy brief," the aforementioned examples can be located as well as other resources (e.g., https:/icpolicyadvocacy.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/icpa-policy-briefs-essential-guide.pdf).

The central rationale in the articles and presentations for use of policy briefs is that policy briefs can be an effective means to get information in the hands of busy policy makers, who likely don't have expertise in the content, but need accessible information bolstered by sound evidence. Given the fast-paced nature of the policy making environment bounded by legislative time constraints, a policy brief is typically thought of as a document of no more than six pages (though some presentations argue for a bit more or less). Policy briefs are well-organized with a focus on objectivity rather than advocacy or opinion. Wong et al. (2016) states that, "a policy brief is analytic and allows the author to remain objective even if the evidence appears persuasive" (p. 21). In addition, DeMarco and Adams (2014) suggest using active voice as this can convey urgency without communicating bias. Most references for policy briefs make a strong recommendation to consider the audience for which the policy brief is being written and tailor the writing accordingly. I use here policymakers as the default audience for which the policy brief is being written but there could be other audiences as well, such as professional organizations, or interested citizens, who could be in a position to influence the policy making process.

Policy briefs state the problem, discuss the consequences of inaction, offer a solution in the form of a policy, provide evidence for the solution, and ascertain the impact of the argued-for policy action. DeMarco and Adams (2014) indicate that for complex problems, the pros and cons of a particular solution can also be provided. In this way, the policy brief is more likely to be viewed as balanced, thoughtful, and with a bit of humility in offering a policy for a problem, in which a solution has likely evaded policy makers in the past. DeMarco and Adams (2014) provide a good deal of information about the design of the brief, e.g., strategic use of bullets, subheadings, and bold type. This information is balanced with a recommendation for effective use of white space. Diagrams could be used, though care must be exercised so as not to develop a document that appears busy and complicated and thus, is less likely to be read. Executive summaries are often used, particularly in policy briefs that reach the upper limit in length. These summaries are typically 1-2 paragraphs. A reference section is also provided for scientific evidence and other documents that are cited in the brief. Note that references are typically not counted as part of the page requirements.

School-Based Counseling Policy Briefs

A rudimentary internet search located three school-based counseling policy briefs. The idea with the search was to locate and provide examples of what policy briefs in school-based counseling currently look like. The examples could also provide a means to further clarify the ISPRESC vision for the policy briefs by critiquing each brief found. All briefs located are from the U.S. The

publication years for the briefs were from 2014 – 2017. The briefs ranged from 2 – 13 pages in length. Most briefs promote the idea of increasing the number of school-based counselors either within a particular state or states, or in specific school districts.

Cumpton and Giani (2014) investigated the ratio of students to school counselors in the state of Texas. The actual school counseling workforce was reduced in Texas in 2011 as a partial means to address a tax revenue shortfall in the state due to the 2008-2009 recession in the U.S. The workforce had not been restored to levels prior to 2011. An additional feature of the workforce reduction was an increase in work responsibilities for school counselors. The policy brief recommended an increase in the school counseling workforce to pre-2011 levels and reduce ancillary work responsibilities. The argument was that more counselors would have greater reach and with a counseling-focused set of work responsibilities, could provide more dedicated counseling services to students. Analyses of existing statewide data were conducted to make the case for the policy recommendations. No published research was referenced. The authors were researchers at the Education Research Center, University of Texas, Austin. The policy brief was six pages in length. The policy brief is noted for effective statistical manipulation of a large statewide database. Those interested in writing a school-based counseling policy brief with access to large, appropriate databases and the skillset to analyze this kind of data, could benefit reading the policy brief offered by these authors.

The Center for Popular Democracy is a coalition of organizations across the U.S. that advocate for strengthening urban schools that serve students of color and students from low-income families. In partnership with the Youth Collaborative, the Center for Popular Democracy developed a policy brief arguing for the expansion of the number of social workers and school counselors as a means to address safety issues in urban schools (Center for Popular Democracy and Youth Collaborative, 2017). The authors affirmed and promoted a restorative justice approach in schools, which involves students in the process and moves away from a punitive approach to dealing with behavioral issues. A number of publications were cited, including some research. The policy brief includes the basic elements of a policy brief mentioned previously. The brief is 13 pages in length however, long for a policy brief. The length may diminish the usefulness that the policy brief might otherwise have as this may detour individuals from reading it. Nevertheless, the document maintains strong recommendations that are well articulated and could help other writers in the development of policy brief arguments and recommendations.

The Health Policy Institute of Ohio, a nonpartisan group that promotes evidence-based health policy, wrote a policy brief that promotes coordinated health services in schools, including mental health (Health Policy Institute of Ohio, 2017). School counselors were mentioned as resource personnel that in their view, could provide minimal mental health support for students. This may reflect a lack of understanding of what school counselors can do, if constraints that bind school counselors in schools can be removed (Lambie et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the document offers by implication, the possibility of including school counselors in the mix of providers of mental health services in schools. The brief states the problem, provides a long list of actions that could be taken, though each action could form the basis for a different policy recommendation. No prioritization of these actions was provided nor was any research cited. A strong rationale for these efforts is evident however and given the dearth of policy research in school-based counseling and the consequent reliance on strong argumentation, this brief could be helpful to policy brief writers in formulating strong policy rationale. The brief is two pages in length.

The three policy briefs were produced by nonprofit organizations that support K-12 schools in some way and further see school counselors in a unique and important role. None of the policy

briefs however, were clear in how the policy briefs were to be used, though logical inferences about use could be drawn; i.e., to work with policy makers and legislators to influence policy. In addition, the three policy briefs had numerous and multi-faceted policy recommendations. Each policy brief was written in specific terms for a particular state or city. Not all policy briefs used research. The policy brief by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (2017) had a particularly strong argument. Though somewhat dated, the policy briefs provide a reasonable representation of the few existing policy briefs for school-based counseling.

JSCPE Guidelines and Template for Policy Briefs

Appendix 1 provides the JSCPE Guidelines for submission of policy brief manuscripts. The guidelines incorporate the key recommendations from the articles on developing policy briefs found in the peer-reviewed literature. The guidelines signal the brevity of policy brief manuscripts by requiring that the number of words range from 1500 - 2500. This translates to 6 – 10 double-spaced pages, not including references or the title page. Appendix 2 provides a template for developing a policy brief. The template provides a structure for the policy brief manuscript. Note that the template requires the comparison of 2-3 policy options and to then choose one providing rationale for the choice. Manuscripts are to be submitted using the JSCPE manuscript submission portal found at www.ispresc.org/journal. All manuscripts will be peer-reviewed.

Discussion and Recommendations

As previously mentioned, policy briefs are used throughout the policy making environment, particularly in the U.S. As short documents written in nontechnical language, policy briefs are seen as another tool that can be used to advocate for a particular policy and aid decision makers in policy adoption and formation. The development and use of policy briefs more broadly is relatively new to school-based counseling. The central argument in this paper is that producing policy briefs is a natural extension and manifestation of the mission and vision of ISPRESC and thus, a logical next step in its work.

Policy briefs require policy research evidence to make a strong case for a particular policy course of action. For school-based counseling there is currently a dearth of school-based counseling policy research studies worldwide (Sink & Carey, 2018). In addition, the development of a compendium of policy research that could substantiate and bolster the policy argument for important aspects of school-based counseling programs will take years to fully carry out (www.ispresc.org/journal - listen to podcast with Dr. Jay Carey, past ISPRESC chair). And despite the importance for school-based counseling policy research voiced in the literature, given lack of institutional support and funding opportunities at the federal level, few researchers are willing to do this work. This situation will challenge the development of sound school-based counseling policy briefs.

What is likely available are studies of varying quality that use a variety of research strategies, on samples of convenience. In addition, many aspects of school-based counseling programs will have little or no policy research work to draw on. This will require scholars interested in developing a policy brief to pull together disparate studies into some type of coherent whole. Trevisan (2017) argues that given the dearth of policy research work for school-based counseling programs, the evidentiary basis and standard for research to support (in this case) the argument used in policy briefs, needs re-thinking. Research woven together that substantiates a

compelling policy intervention, even though not constructed from research strategies that generate strong evidence, e.g., randomized-control trials (the gold standard for research evidence), is a possible approach for bolstering school-based counseling policy recommendations. Those interested in developing and submitting policy brief manuscripts will likely need to develop rationale from pieces of evidence, informed by their knowledge and expertise of different research methods and how these methods might complement one another in a way that provides a sound, compelling argument. While this action is a higher order skill to be sure, it is possible, and a compelling avenue for dealing with the challenge just mentioned.

One source that could be used as a starting point for the development of a policy brief is the *International Handbook for Policy Research on School-Based Counseling* (Carey et al., 2017). The handbook was a major step forward in detailing what is known about school-based counseling research work internationally. The handbook brought together prominent scholars from several countries throughout the world to account and appraise the school-based counseling policy research work within their respective countries. The handbook further provided a compilation of policy research methodologies that could be used in the service of policy research work. The beginning of a policy research roadmap was offered to those interested in conducting policy research to promote the sound implementation of school-based counseling programs and practices internationally.

Given the lack of school-based counseling policy research worldwide, it may be the case that policy-oriented research used to make policy recommendations for a particular country, are adopted or adapted from another country where policy research was previously conducted. In this instance, a well-thought argument will need to be developed to justify why this can be successfully accomplished. JSCPE has done considerable work to publish and promote cross-national studies in school-based counseling. These studies could provide substantive information for developing policy briefs within a particular country represented in these studies or provide ideas for a policy recommendation within a country with similar contexts (see the JSCPE special issue on cross-national studies, https://scholarworks.wm.edu/jscpe/vol2/iss1/). In this regard, the JSCPE cross-national studies are likely a strong resource for addressing the issue of country-context when developing policy briefs.

Publishing policy briefs is a new venture for scholarly journals in general, and school-based counseling in particular. This is an opportunity for ISPRESC and JSCPE to provide leadership for the translation of policy research into accessible, persuasive information in the form of policy briefs. Although informed by policy research, this type of writing is different than the academic writing scholars and researchers are accustomed to. Thus, reflection and practice will likely be required for many writers.

A productive strategy for the preparation of writing a policy brief is to read several previously written policy briefs. Given the dearth of policy briefs in school-based counseling, this will require reading policy briefs in broadly similar fields, such as health and education. Reading policy briefs can provide the reader with a feel for the kind of writing needed to advocate for policy on the one hand, while maintaining some objectivity on the other. Reading policy briefs can help to get an overall sense for how best to craft a cogent policy argument and glean ways to effectively structure the document. When reading these documents, the submission guidelines offered by the JSCPE editorial team could be applied and an assessment of the overall quality and effectiveness of these documents against these guidelines be made. Further, compare and contrast policy brief documents and consider reasons why one policy brief document may be more effective than another. By doing the tasks just mentioned, the reader will sharpen their understanding and focus

on what is required for publication, increasing the likelihood that once submitted, their policy brief manuscript is of publishable quality. It will also help to ensure that the policy brief can be used effectively to influence policy, arguably the ultimate aim in writing policy briefs.

There are a number of policy-oriented organizations that maintain websites that archive policy briefs in education and health, and that can be freely downloaded. The websites associated with the three school-based counseling policy briefs discussed in this paper are examples of these organizations. Another organization is the National Education Policy Center (NEPC) at the University of Colorado (https://nepc.colorado.edu/). The NEPC website maintains policy briefs that can be easily accessed for review and consideration. The Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University (https://cepa.stanford.edu/publications/reports) houses a variety of policy documents. While the website does not maintain a specific category for policy briefs, as one reviewer of this paper mentioned, the documents provide examples of how to write policy-oriented papers that are both provocative and authoritative in tone, a key challenge in crafting effective policy briefs. In addition, both UNESCO (https://www.unesco.org/en/education-policies) and OECD (https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/briefs.html?orderBy=mostRelevant&page=0) provide a variety of policy briefs written for international contexts. And there are other websites still. In short, there are a variety of resources that can be accessed to help writers frame and motivate the task of writing a policy brief. Those interested in writing and submitting a policy brief for possible publication are encouraged to access one or more of these websites and read several policy briefs to better understand and prepare for the task of writing a policy brief document.

Despite the challenges, policy briefs can be seen as another tool that the school-based counseling research, policy, and practitioner communities can use in advocating for a particular policy action. The ISPRESC submission guidelines and template provide strong guidance for the submission of policy brief manuscripts. The ISPRESC executive committee and JSCPE editorial team hope that scholars, researchers, graduate students and others interested in this work will positively respond to this new JSCPE call to action. By developing effective policy briefs, ISPRESC membership can expand their influence and further aid in the development and implementation of high-quality school-based counseling programs that benefit children and youth throughout the world.

ORCID ID
Michael S. Trevisan https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9170-2184

Funding

Conflict of Interest Statement
The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

References
Aluede, O., Carey, J. C., Harris, B., & Lee, S. M. (2017). Present status and future directions for policy research and evaluation in school-based counseling. In J.C. Carey, B. Harris, S. M. Lee, & O. Aluede (Eds.). *International handbook for policy-research in school-based counseling* (pp. 503-520). Sprinter International AG.

American School Counselor Association (2021). School counselor roles & ratios. Accessed on November 23, 2021. Retrieved from https://www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/School-Counselor-Roles-Ratios

Cardona, M. A. (2021). *Supporting child and student social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

Carey, J. C., Harris, B., Lee, S. M., & Aluede, O. (2017). *International handbook for policy-research in school-based counseling*. Sprinter International AG.

Center for Popular Democracy and Urban Youth Collaborative (2017). *Young people's vision for safe, supportive and inclusive schools* (Policy brief). https://populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Policy%20Brief%20UYC%20and%20CPD.pdf

Cumpton, G., & Giani, M. (2014). *Texas school counselor study: Exploring the supply, demand and evolving roles of school counselors* (Policy brief). Education Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin. https://texaserc.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/18-UTA039-Brief-Counselors-3.11.20-REV.pdf

DeMarco, R., & Adams, K. (2014). The mechanics of writing a policy brief. *Nursing Outlook, 62*, 219-224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2014.04.002

Harris, B. (2013). *International school-based counselling: A review of school-based counselling internationally*. British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and Department of Health.

Health Policy Institute of Ohio (2017). *Health services in schools* (Policy brief). https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PolicyBrief_EducationAndHealth_Part2_ExecutiveSummary.pdf

Journal of School-based Counseling Policy and Evaluation (n.d.). *An interview with Dr. Jay Carey*, Emeritus Professor, UMASS, Amherst and Past Chair, ISPRESC. www.ispresc.org/journal

Lambie, G. W., Stickl Haugen, J., Borland, J. R., & Campbell, L. O. (2019). Who took "counseling" out of the role of professional school counselors in the United States? *Journal of School-Based Counseling Policy and Evaluation, 1*(3), 51-61. https://doi.org/10.25774/7kjb-bt85

Murthy, V. H. (2021). *Protecting youth mental health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory*. U.S. Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General. https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf

Nannini, A. & Houd, S. C. (2010). Translating systematic reviews for policy makers. *Gerontological Nursing, 36*, 22-26.

Niles, J. K. (2022). Practice into policy and policy into practice: An interview with Dr. Carol Dahir. *Journal of School-Based Counseling Policy and Evaluation, 4*(2), 54-61. https://doi.org/10.25774/w51x-fd67

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021). *Tackling the mental health impact of the COVID-19 crisis: An integrated, whole-of-society response (OECD policy responses to coronavirus [COVID-19])*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/0ccafa0b-en

Rallis, S. F. & Carey, J. C. (2017). Introduction to policy research in school-based counseling. In J.C. Carey, B. Harris, S. M. Lee, & O. Aluede (Eds.), *International handbook for policy-research in school-based counseling* (pp. 3-10). Sprinter International AG.

Shi, Q., Sink, C. A., & Mullen, P. R. (2024). A call for policy research in school-based counseling: Editors' perspective on the past, present, and future of JSCPE. *Journal of School-based Counseling Policy and Evaluation, 6*(2), 82-85. https://doi.org/10.25774/xwd4-q718

Sink, C. A., & Carey, J. C. (2018). Commentary: On school-based counseling policy and evaluation. *Journal of School-Based Counseling Policy and Evaluation, 1*(1), Article 3. https://doi.org/10.25774/sxqq-zm26

Trevisan, M. S. (2017). Evaluating the impact of national and state policies on school-based counseling practices and student outcomes. In J.C. Carey, B. Harris, S. M. Lee, & O. Aluede (Eds.), *International handbook for policy-research in school-based counseling* (pp. 183-206). Sprinter International AG.

Trevisan, M. S. (2023, January 4 – 5). *Supporting the critical need for school-based counseling* [Keynote]. The 5th International Conference on Counseling, Psychotherapy, and Wellness. Christ University, Bangalore, India.

Trevisan, M. S. (2024, September 6 – 8). *Policy research for K-12 school-based counseling* [Keynote]. International School-Based Counseling Policy and Practice (ISPRESC) Conference: Promoting Psychological Resilience in Schools. Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey.

United Nations (2020). *COVID-19 and the need for action on mental health* (Policy brief). United Nations Sustainable Development Group. https://unsdg.un.org/resources/policy-brief-covid-19-and-need-action-mental-health

Wong, S. L., Bazemore, A. W., Green, L. A., & Miller, B. F. (2016). How to write a health policy brief. *Families, Systems, & Health, 35*(1), 21-24. https://doi.org/10.1037/fsh0000238

Appendix 1

Guidelines for Writing Policy Briefs for JSCPE

Purpose

Policy briefs published in JSCPE aim to translate research into actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, school administrators, and counseling professionals. Briefs should be concise, evidence-based, and focus on advancing policies in school-based counseling and educational equity around the world.

Length and Structure

Policy briefs should be 1,500–2,500 words, excluding references. This translates to 6-10 double-spaced pages (APA style requirement for submission. Note that in practice, a policy brief is likely single-spaced. Thus, the word requirement translates to 3-5 single-spaced pages. Use the following structure:

Please refer to the template for basic structures of policy briefs.

Formatting Guidelines

1. **Language:** Use clear, accessible, and jargon-free language. Avoid overly technical terms to ensure broader readability.
2. **Headings and Subheadings:** Use headings to organize sections and facilitate navigation.
3. **Visuals:** Where applicable, include visuals (e.g., graphs, tables) to convey complex data more effectively. Ensure visuals are high-quality and appropriately labeled.
4. **Author Details:** Provide full names, affiliations, and contact information for all authors.

Submission Requirements

Policy briefs should be submitted through the JSCPE submission portal. Please ensure the manuscript adheres to the journal's overall formatting, including the latest edition of APA style, and ethical guidelines. For specific questions, contact the editorial team.

Note. This guideline aligns with JSCPE's mission of advancing policy and evaluation in school-based counseling while promoting actionable and research-informed solutions.

Appendix 2

Policy Brief Template

Title Page
- A concise and informative title that captures the focus of the policy brief.
- Provide the author(s)' name, title, and contact details for follow-up inquiries.
- The title page does not count as part of the page number requirement.
- Acknowledgement(s).

Executive Summary
- A short (1–2 paragraph) summary that outlines the problem, key findings, and your recommended policy action.
- Use accessible language to immediately grab the reader's attention.

Introduction
- **Background and rationale:** Contextualize the issue—why it is important and relevant.
- **Purpose:** State the objective of the brief (e.g., to inform a decision or advocate for a specific action).
- Clearly define the issue being addressed.

Literature Review
- Include relevant literature on the issue

Policy Options (Discussion & Analysis)
- Present and compare 2–3 potential policy solutions.
- For each option, include:
  - **Description:** What does the option entail?
  - **Pros and Cons:** Evaluate the potential benefits and drawbacks.

Recommendation
- Advocate for your preferred policy option.
- Provide evidence supporting why this option is the most effective or feasible.
- Be clear and action-oriented (e.g., "We recommend implementing X to achieve Y").

Implementation Considerations
- Identify steps, resources, and potential challenges involved in enacting the recommended policy.
- Suggest strategies for overcoming obstacles.

Conclusion
- Reiterate the significance of addressing the issue.
- Summarize the recommendation and emphasize the desired outcome.

References

- Include citations for all data, studies, and sources used in the brief.
- Use the latest APA style manual, currently 7th edition.

Note. This template is designed to keep the document concise and focused, 6-10 double-spaced pages in length, while ensuring it remains impactful for decision-makers.