

AN EXPLORATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE
COUNSELORS IN MISSOURI HAVE AS THEY ASSIST UNDOCUMENTED
STUDENTS TRYING TO GAIN ACCESS TO COLLEGE

Martha DeVries

Dr. Carole Edmonds, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the knowledge high school guidance counselors in Missouri have as they work with undocumented students who are trying to gain access to college. Utilizing the tools of case study including document analysis, focus groups, interviews, and observations, this study attempts to gain a thorough understanding about what high school guidance counselors in Missouri know and what they do not know about assisting undocumented students seeking access to college and other post-secondary opportunities. The participants in this study were high school guidance counselors in a mid-sized urban/suburban school district. Because Missouri is not a DREAM act state, these high school guidance counselors face barriers when assisting undocumented students. The study indicates high school guidance counselors in Missouri lack awareness about undocumented students, lack knowledge about laws, practices, and programs concerning undocumented students, and need training about how to best serve undocumented students who are applying for post-secondary educational opportunities.