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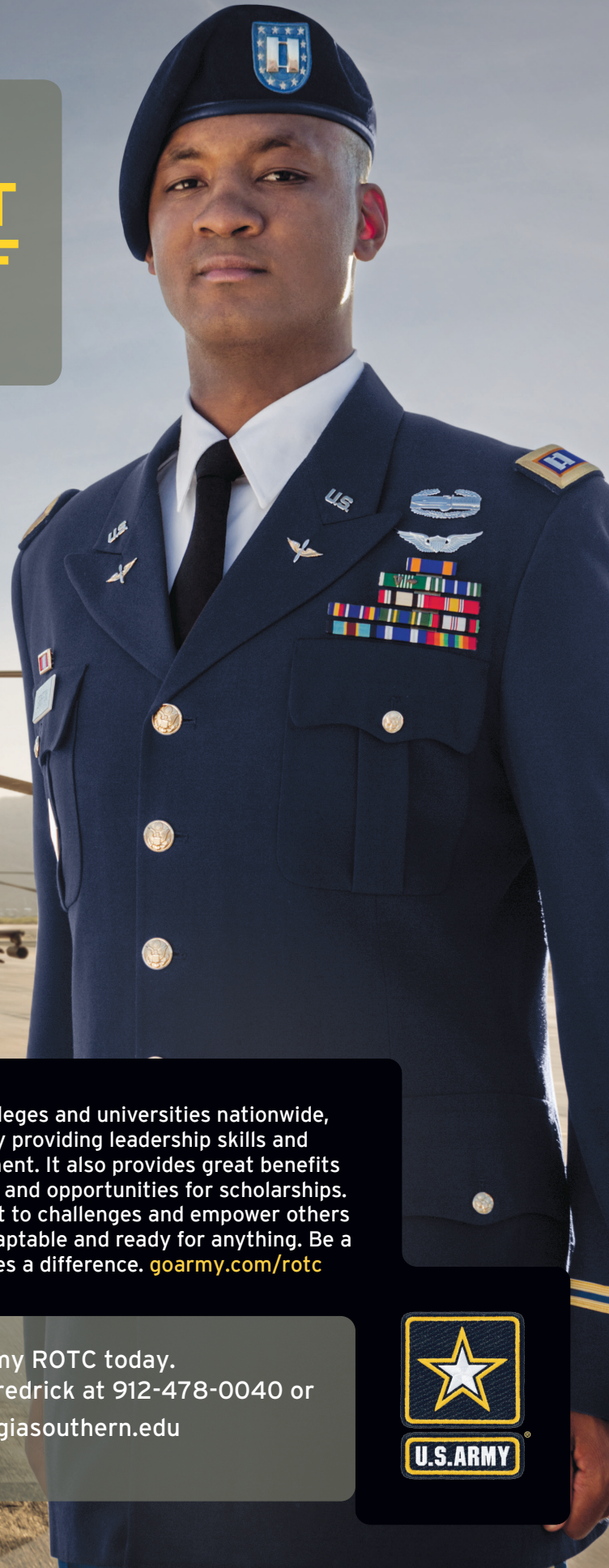
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Letter from the President



Dear Georgia School Counselors:
It is so hard to believe that we are getting close to the end of another school year. I don't know about you but as much as I

look forward to a break I also am overwhelmed by how much has to be done before the final day.

One of the highlights of our year is the annual GSCA Day On the Hill. Be sure to scan the entire Beacon to see photos from our visit to the GA State Capitol on Wednesday, February 6. We had about 75 school counselors from throughout the state who were able to join us as we held an educational session where heard from Representative Randy Nix, Representative Matthew Gambill, Talley Wells from Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, and Helen Sloat and George Ray from Neslson Mullins (our lobbyists). We also were joined by Dr. Barbara Walls, Dawn Mann, and Brent Shropshire from the Department of Education.

Some of the school counselors who attended were able to sit in on a Joint Committee (Juvenile Justice and Health and Human Services) meeting to hear from Voices for Georgia's Children to give an overview on a comprehensive child policy. This provided an unexpected opportunity

to learn just a little bit about what goes on during the Legislative Session. After having a photo with Governor Brian Kemp those in attendance entered the House Gallery and observed part of their session.

To round out our morning the group gathered with Representatives David Clark (R-Buford), Matthew Gambill (R-Cartersville), Robert Dickey (R-Musella), Debbie Buckner (D-Junction City), and Rick Jasperse (R-Jasper) to receive the House Resolution they co-sponsored recognizing school counselors in Georgia. GSCA is highly committed to our advocacy efforts. Your advocacy co-chairs, Gail Smith and Jennifer Diaz, are working closely with our lobbyists to ensure that, in addition to working to advance our agenda for adopting CKES as our official evaluation tool, lowering ratios with full funding, and adopting a state wide comprehensive school counseling model we are addressing issues important to school counselors as they arise.

Advocacy is a huge task and requires the support and help of all school counselors in Georgia. We are fortunate to have a fearless few who are working closely with the co-chairs to ensure we are a voice that is heard by our law makers during the legislative session. Honestly although a lot of the official things happen at the Capitol in Atlanta our success depends on advocacy at a local level. You can also help by engaging with your local representatives. I encourage you to identify these folks and reach out to them and begin developing relationships. Having

relationships with them prior to asking or their support (either on issues or financial) is so beneficial. Best wishes for a smooth finish to this school year!

Leslie Hamilton
GSCA President 2018-2019



2019-2020 GSCA Election Results

Congratulations to the following winners of the GSCA elections!

Jennifer Jones

President-Elect

Laura Sims

Secretary

Beth Ruff

Elementary Director

Myesha Sims

Secondary Director

Vance Sims

Northern Director

Laura Ross

Metro Director

Amy Taylor

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Brent Henderson

Past President Member of Finance Committee

Lakisha Bonner

General Member of Finance Committee





2018-2019 Leadership Team

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Parliamentarian	Sloane Molloy	Middle Liaison	Kristi Hess
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Secondary Director	Mark Ellis	Conference Co-Chair	Julie Jordan
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Northern Director	Vance Sims	Host City Co-Chair	Beverly Stewart
Metro Director	Katrina Wilson	Host City Co-Chair	Lakeisha Williams
Central Director	Yasmin Whirl	Conference Team	Natalie Edirmanasinghe
Southern Director	Donna Jones	Conference Team	Rachel Read
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Advocacy	Gail Smith	Beacon Editor	Chon Hester
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Member Finance Committee	Laura Spencer	Photographer	Stacey Cooke
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Career Post-Secondary Co-Chair	Lakisha Bonner	Region 1 Liaison	Vacant
Career Post-Secondary Co-Chair	Lee Grimes	Region 2 Liaison	Felisha Green
CKES	Robin Zorn	Region 3 Liaison	Whitney Adams
Professional Recognition Co-Chair	Alexandra Huguelet	Region 4 Liaison	Jennifer Jones
Professional Recognition Co-Chair	Myesha Davis	Region 5 Liaison	Moya Pope
Service Project Chair	Michelle Stevens	Region 6 Liaison	Crystal Holt
Graduate Student Liaison	Cameron Aurandt	Region 7 Liaison	Alecia Pittman

Message from the President-Elect



Hello My Fellow School Counseling Champions:

I am overwhelmed with joy and honored that I will get an opportunity to serve as GSCA

President during the 2019-2020 academic year. As I reflect on my GSCA Leadership Journey, I am very thankful for those who gave me an opportunity to become involved and paying it forward is a goal that I have as we as an association attempt to develop future school counselor leaders.

Leadership doesn't have to start at the state level. Your leadership journey can start right in your school or district. Do you have the opportunity to facilitate professional learning to your faculty/staff related to school counseling issues? Doing so can provide you with an opportunity to provide them a whole new outlook or awareness on some of the concerns/issues that your students tend to face. On a district level, becoming involved with district committees or planning a districtwide meeting for school counselors in your district are just a few avenues you can take to become involved districtwide. Opportunities like those mentioned helped to shape my leadership skillset and I felt prepared when I got involved with GSCA TEN years ago. Thank you for your continued membership in GSCA. The Executive Board tries to keep the membership dues at a rate that

is affordable for graduate students, retired school counselors, and the working professionals. So please make an effort to keep your GSCA membership current and encourage others to join so we can all enjoy the benefits of memberships.



The conference team and I are working hard to provide you a wonderful 2019 Conference that will be filled with informative sessions, motivating speakers, and many opportunities to learn and exchange new, exciting and successful ideas with exhibitors and fellow school counselors. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a special invitation to each of you to join us in Augusta, GA for the 2019 Annual Conference. Mark your calendar now and start planning to join us Wednesday, November 13th through Friday, November 15th, 2019. The conference will be held at the Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center. This year's conference theme is "School Counselors: Champions for ALL Students". When crafting the conference theme, I began thinking about a prominent TED Talk from Rita Pierson where she stated, "Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly

be.” By attending Conference 2019, I hope that it will provide you with the motivation that you need to be the champion our students so desperately need in times like these. You can start planning now by visiting the website tinyurl.com/2019GSCAhotel to reserve your room at the host hotel. Another way you can start planning is by visiting the GSCA website to submit a conference proposal for other school counselors and special invited guests to hear about the great programs and initiatives that you are implementing to be that champion for all students. Proposals are being accepted until May 15, 2019.

Students across the state are benefitting from the “seeds” that you as school counselors have planted and it’s because of “champions” like you! Have a great end to the school year!!
Maria Grovner
President-Elect

Using Strategic Abandonment to Improve Your School Comprehensive Counseling Program

Lakisha Bonner
bonner.lakisha@mail.fcboe.org
Career and Post-Secondary Planning
Co-Chair

The space race launched our profession in the 1950’s; as Congress charged guidance counselors to guided students into careers that would improve the United States’ competitive edge. The guidance counselors often worked in insulation; providing reactive services to some students based on a perception of

need. However as with space exploration, over the years role of the guidance counselor has evolved. Today we are leaders providing data-driven, proactive services to all students. We are school counselors; an essential role in the school improvement process.



As defined by ASCA, school counselors are uniquely qualified to provide:

- ❖ *individual student academic planning and goal setting (plans for postsecondary/career options)*
- ❖ *school counseling classroom lessons based on student success standards*
- ❖ *short-term counseling to students and referrals for long-term support*
- ❖ *collaboration with families/teachers/administrators/community for student success*
- ❖ *advocacy for students at individual education plan meetings and other student-focused meetings*
- ❖ *data analysis to identify student issues, needs and challenges.*

Does the definition from ASCA reflect you and your school counseling program? If not, it’s time for some strategic abandonment. Ask yourself: What are the practices you implement that aren’t working and are taking your time and energy? Are you getting the desired results from those things are working and you are comfortable doing?

Strategic abandonment occurs when you move from a current practice showing mediocre results to create capacity available for future improved practice. As you reflect, brainstorm and start making plans for next year, you should consider strategic abandonment. What you should leave behind? For example, is your plate overrun with coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students, coordinating testing, and/or supervising classrooms or common areas? These are areas for you to consider strategical abandonment.

Conduct an audit of your school counseling program. Recognize a few areas there’s not an alignment with a comprehensive school



counseling program? They are things you control and things you don’t. The easiest practices to abandon are those of which you control. However, the difficult task is to address the things you do not control. For those practices, a crucial conversation of abandonment with your school and/or district administration is necessary. To help begin the conversation, you may use

common language by explaining that changes can:

- ❖ *Improve the quality of school counseling services by ensuring accountability for professional school counselor effectiveness.*
- ❖ *Contribute to the successful achievement of the goals and objectives defined in the vision, mission, and goals of your school.*
- ❖ *Optimize student learning and growth.*

These are the primary purposes of the Counselor Keys Effectiveness System (CKES). Many administrators are unfamiliar with the school counselor role and responsibilities, and CKES could assist in the process of gaining a better understanding. Remember facilitating change takes time. However, understanding your role and responsibilities and how your work impacts student achievement, the data from your school counseling program audit can move you one step closer to improving and revitalizing your school counseling program. Strategic abandonment is an essential tool for keeping your school counseling program improving to meet the academic achievement, career and social/emotional development of all students.



Picking Theories that Work for You

Kathryn Sadowski
ksadowski@glynn.k12.ga.us
Secretary

When I first became a school counselor seventeen years ago, I could not wait to work with students and put my new theoretical knowledge to work. I understood that I would do more than counsel, but I did not quite understand the time constraints. I remember referring to my *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy* textbook by Gerald Corey with great regularity. It was very disappointing when I finally realized that I could not devote the time needed to truly counsel the students with the reasoning behind some of these theories. To meet the needs of my students, I began to pick different components from several theories.



Children develop personality through socialization. Alfred Adler called this lifestyle. Lifestyle was developed by the child's degree of activity, organ inferiority, birth order and sibling relationships, family values, family

atmosphere, and parenting styles (Wedding & Corsini, 2013, p. 66-67). Carl Rogers believes that infants develop through "direct organismic valuing;" the infant assigns positive feeling with self-enhancing experiences and negative feelings with experiences that do not enhance themselves (Wedding & Corsini, 2013, p. 114). Adler's Individual Psychology, Roger's Person-Centered Therapy, and Shazer and Berg's Solution Focused Brief Therapy combine together nicely to form my personal theory for working with my secondary students.

Adler believed that everyone is unique (Fisher, 2001) and all behaviors are goal-oriented (Halbur & Halbur, 2011, p. 44). Adlerian theory can be used at the secondary level for behaviors including attention seeking, power struggles, revenge and inadequacy (Wright, 2012, p.189). "The central Adlerian belief is that children misbehave because they are acting out from faulty logic about how the world works" (Wright, 2012, p. 189). In Person-Centered therapy, the student learns to use their inner resources for growth and self-realization (Wedding & Corsini, 2013, p. 98). Behaviors appear to be consistent with how they see themselves, that is, their worth (Wright, 2012, p196). When students have hope, they are motivated to improve aspects of their life (Berg, 2003). Solution Focused therapy is concerned with making a change in a short time; it focuses on the solution, not on what may have triggered the problem (Corey, 1996, p. 412).

To begin change, the school counselor and student must build a relationship. Trust is the most crucial value to build this relationship (Wright, 2012, p. 185).

Every student should be treated with respect (Pescitelli, 1996). Rogers believed that a person will move in a positive direction when treated with respect, unconditional positive regard, and empathy (Wedding & Corsini, 2013, p. 97). Adlerian approach to the counselor/student relationship is one of mutual trust, respect, confidence, and alignment of goals (Corey, 1996, p. 142). It is important to build a trusting, respectful, positive relationship with the student so that the student feels comfortable and free in the counseling setting.



In Solution Focused Brief Therapy, the counselor must help students describe small, realistic, and doable steps they can take as soon as the next day (Dolan, n.d.). The student is the center of counseling; they ultimately direct the path the therapy will take. Independence must be achieved if the student is to be successful on their own (Pescitelli, 1996).

The counselor must focus on changing behaviors that may interfere with the student's school day. The counselor must answer: Where does this behavior take place?, With whom does this behavior take place?, Who knows about this behavior?, and What effect does this behavior have? For example, *Motivation as Striving* happens when a person wants to move from a negative situation to a positive situation. If a person feels inferior, they will do things to make themselves feel superior (Wedding & Corsini, 2013, p.57).

Approaches should be taken to help the student learn how to behave and interact with others successfully (Wright, 1996, p. 190).

One of my favorite quotes is from Frederick Douglass (n.d.): "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." This is a good reminder to me of why I do what I do every day. My entire career, both professional and extracurricular, has been devoted to the development of young people. There is simply nothing else I can see myself doing but helping students find their own path to becoming successful adults.



The Culturally Competent Counselor

Cedric Cooks
cedric_w_cooks@gwinnett.k12.ga.us
Secondary Liaison

What does it really mean to be a culturally competent counselor? This question has been repeatedly asked in the counseling profession. As our country and schools become more and more diverse, counselors are expected to serve clients who do not share their

cultural background, beliefs or values. Additionally, technology has increased the importance and demand for counselors to demonstrate their cultural competence. Clients from varying cultural backgrounds now, thanks to advances in technology, have access to connect with counselors from any part of the country. Even more reason for counselors to possess culturally competent skills and knowledge when working with groups that are culturally different from their own.

Multicultural counseling is known as the fourth force in counseling. Multicultural counseling offers effective interventions to culturally diverse clients. Race, ethnicity, and cultural influence a client's identity and life circumstances. Multicultural counseling involves two main parts: an understanding of the client's worldview and the recognition of a counselor's own cultural values and bias. In order to work progressively with diverse clients, a counselor must recognize any previously held ideas that they have established about a population based on their ethnicity, nationality, race, etc.

Counselors working with children of diverse cultural backgrounds face many challenges. Some of these challenges, according to Baruth and Manning (2012), are counselors having communication difficulties, misunderstanding the culture and the impact of culture on the counseling process, making faulty assumptions about cultural assimilations, failing to understand differences in social class values and orientations, making stereotypical generalizations and assumptions of cultural bias, and failing to understand the worldview of the

client. Even well-meaning counselors can make mistakes when working with marginalized clients. Some counselors can make the mistake of relying on the client to educate them about their culture and lived experiences. Resources exist to facilitate competence in these areas, and counselors have a responsibility to refrain from placing the burden of their education on the client or child.

Though counseling professionals may have different definitions of multicultural counseling, according to Baruth and Manning (2012), there are key parts to multicultural counseling that counselors can agree:

- Interventions should be sensitive to clients' backgrounds, time of life, gender perspectives, and sexual orientation.
- Counselors plan for differences that occur during the counseling process as disconnect between the cultural backgrounds of the counselor and the client increases.
- Counseling is culturally based, both the counselor and the client have their own worldviews and cultural perspectives.
- Clients bring their concerns based on their cultural and ethnic backgrounds, as well as their life period, gender, and sexual orientation perspectives.
- Counselors and clients may have different

perceptions of the counseling process and of the outcomes of treatment.

Counselors are encouraged to make a commitment to become culturally competent. Training in multicultural counseling can assist counselors in becoming culturally skilled by increasing one's awareness of culturally learned attitudes, beliefs, and values; increasing knowledge of culturally relevant facts; and developing skills for interventions that are culturally appropriate. As the population becomes more diverse, the need for multicultural counseling grows more apparent. The growing population of diverse individuals in this country add pressure on counselors to be culturally competent in their service of delivery.



A survey was also sent throughout the state of Georgia in March of 2018. Forty counties responded with a total of 95 responses from various schools. Of the 95 responses, 16 schools used the Counselor KEYS in 2017-2018 and 44 plan on using it in 2018-2019. Nineteen schools that said they were not implementing the Counselor KEYS in 2018-2019 said that they would like further training to implement it in 2019-2020.

In addition, we continue to have communication with the Georgia Department of Education about the Counselor KEYS. Currently, they are

working on a Model Program for the state of Georgia which works hand in hand with the Counselor KEYS



Show Program Accountability by Collaborating with Your Counseling Advisory Committee

Donna M. Jones
donna.jones@sccpss.com
Southern Director

Effective counseling advisory committees are rewarding and provide great support to a school's counseling program. So, who actually has a counseling advisory committee? The answer is probably not enough. This question has prompted some informal surveys through dialogue with school counselors within the district and in various areas of the state. As a result, it has been discovered that many have not explored the option of having an advisory committee for different reasons. Some have expressed they are consumed and the thought of doing something additional is mind boggling, some merely stated they haven't taken the time to see what is necessary to begin the process and a few have committees established but have shared they have some reservations about the

committee's effectiveness. Whatever the reasons may be, it is with hope that more school counselors will make time and explore this committee as a viable asset to their comprehensive school counseling programs.

What is a counseling advisory? According to American School Counselor Association (2012) it is a representative group of stakeholders selected to review and advise on the implementation of the school counseling program. The council should meet at least twice a year and maintain an agenda and minutes for each meeting. The benefits of having school-wide and community stakeholders are astonishing. These individuals can assist with advising on program goals, reviewing program results, making recommendations, soliciting funding and resources as well as advocating and engaging in public relations for the school counseling program. O'Grady (2015) refers to the advisory council members as advisors and advocates.



So now that you've wrapped your head around the idea of implementing an advisory council, let's discuss some essentials to ensure your team advisors and advocates are comprised of individuals that make an effective team. ASCA (2012) recommends 8-20 members. It's imperative that you are selective in this process. You want to ensure the representation is broad but

efficient in their areas. Be mindful of your comprehensive program goals as they should be aligned with the school's improvement plan. It is ideal to select individuals that will greatly impact program goals which ultimately contribute to student achievement.



So how do you select the right people for your team? You seek out stakeholders that understand the essentials of having a comprehensive program that is data driven and are happy to assist in achieving program goals. It's helpful to network on occasion and be attentive to the resources constantly walking in and out of school buildings daily. As a result, you want to ensure the outcomes of the advisory council are rewarding. This initially occurs when you enlighten your stakeholders by sharing the mission and vision for your program. This allows them to value and become a part of the program.

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Elementary Career Planning: It's Never Too Early!

Nicohl Shelton Webb, Ed.S
nwebb@henry.k12.ga.us
Elementary Liaison



It is never too early to begin career exploration with your elementary students. We often hear the words career and college and associate the need for exploration with high school students. As school counselors, we are often left asking ourselves, "Where do I begin?" In

Georgia, we expose our students to the Georgia Elementary Career Cluster activities as outlined by the Department of Education. Although there are career lessons on the DOE website, there are new and different ways that we can expose our students to careers. Some of these ways include putting lessons/activities into Google Classroom, having a traditional career day, or holding virtual career day speakers using Skype in the Classroom.

Google classroom is not just a tool for teachers. There are tons of features within all of the Google suite apps that are perfect for counselors and just need to be adapted to figure out how it can be used and what will work best for us and for our students. Google Classroom is a way for you to "house" all of your information and activities from your career lessons. Creating classes within Google Classroom will allow you to be able to keep your information in one place and make it easily accessible for students and/or parents. The G Suite training videos

(<https://portal.synergysc.com/a/#videos/en/classroom>) are a great way to learn about Google apps in videos of 3 minutes or less. Once all of the information is placed in your classroom, you are able to adjust whatever activity you would like and can even add to them. All of the information will stay there until you archive the classroom. For easy accessibility, just share the class code, invite them to join the class and you will be ready for your Career core counseling curriculum lesson. Having virtual career day speakers is a great way to ensure that your students hear relevant experiences and see speakers that you wouldn't normally be able to bring into your building during a traditional career day. One of the ways to find speakers is through the Skype in

the Classroom website, which is powered by Microsoft and is free to join. Once you have joined, you will have access to various ways to connect your classroom to the world. When I found a Marine Biologist that works with sharks but also is a photographer for National Geographic to Skype with our 2nd grade students for their Health Sciences Career cluster, I knew I was onto something. Our students were captivated by the pictures they were shown and the stories about the Marine Biologist's career and life. Infusing Skype lessons into my counseling program has afforded me the opportunity to expose my students to careers that they might never get a chance to see otherwise.



Never underestimate the power of having a traditional career day for your students. I typically ask my parents, community

members and have even solicited volunteers through websites such as www.volunteermatch.org in order to gather speakers. Since I only like to have one crazy day, I schedule all of my speakers, careers on wheels and Skype lessons for a K-5 Career Day. It is organized chaos but it is truly one of my favorite days of the year because it is an opportunity to see the joy and awe in my student's faces as learn and grow. Career exploration can sometimes be a daunting task for elementary counselors, especially as we struggle to explain difficult careers to young students. Our reward comes when we

are able to see students interact with professionals and discover new career possibilities they never knew existed. Whether you are planning a traditional career day, exploring virtual career options or doing core counseling curriculum lessons through Google Classroom, all of these options allow counselors to reach students and show them ways to be college, career and life ready.

College Fairs, Career Fairs...Oh My!

Ebony Payno

Ebony.Payno@cobbk12.org

Cobb Horizon High School

College and career fairs are highly effective strategies for bringing college representation as well as career industry leaders into your building. You gift your students, not only with firsthand insight directly from the entity (as opposed to websites, friends, parents, other third parties, or social-media platforms), but also, easy access and advantages that would not otherwise be available to them (e.g., submitting a college and/or job application on-site).

Key tips and strategies for successful planning and implementation:

- Choose the date early (at least eight months in advance) and set a budget. Communicate your budget needs with your administration. In some cases, there may not be enough tables and chairs on hand, which may require contacting your institution's warehouse or other similar entity. Also, look for donations from the community (e.g., from restaurants or caterers as well as grocery stores). Many establishments

will gladly donate food items if they are solicited early as some have budgets established solely for this purpose.

- Work with your state counseling association and register your fair with NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling) to avoid conflicts with other key events. College reps schedule their yearly travel plans in early summer. If you wait until the last minute to invite reps, you won't get the widespread college participation you desire.

- Some college reps may request a separate room that can serve as a breakout session. Breakout sessions, such as a FAFSA Workshop or SAT/ACT Informational Workshop, will add value to the student's experience. Expect a response rate of approximately 80%.

- Strategically make decisions on which colleges to invite depending on the demographic and expressed interest of the students at your school or program. Include colleges in your immediate area, ones that have sent reps previously or that your institution has a partnership with, colleges your students have visited, and colleges that the students are applying to. You can survey students via www.polleverywhere.com to see which colleges they are interested in learning more about.

- Have a guidebook, directory, or map of the fair for students when they arrive. Also consider having office aides and/or peer leaders serve as hosts for the event. Distribute a list of suggested questions for the students to ask of the reps. Suggest that students bring their résumé and dress for success.

- Provide an evaluation form via Google forms (connected to a QR Code, which simplifies the data-collection process) so that college reps, students, and staff members can give you helpful feedback to use in planning the next fair. You can create flyers with the survey's QR code to post and have students download the free QR Code Reader App to their phone prior to the fair's date (that can also serve as their "ticket" to get into the fair).

- Provide students with supplemental resources that can serve as take-away items at the fair (notepads and pens). Wells Fargo donates free College Planning Guidebooks to local schools. They can be requested by contacting your local branch. Visit <https://www.wellsfargo.com/goals-childs-future/college/> for more information.

For more ideas, check out *Not Your Average Educator Resource Book: A Simple Holistic Guide to Program Planning and Execution for the School Counselor and Student Support Staff* available on Amazon!

Selecting Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs)

Richard E. Cleveland
rcleveland@georgiasouthern.edu
Counselor Educator Chair

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) continue to grow in the US. This expansion has seen MBIs and curricula created specifically for P-12. Sadly, this has also seen activities claiming to be MBIs lacking both substance and reliability. Known as "McMindfulness",

such techniques are more concerned with profitability rather than capability.

How can school counselors interested in utilizing MBIs navigate the various offerings with confidence? One approach is reviewing four key elements for any MBI. This analysis considers whether or not the MBI can be used within the school counseling program, as well as comparing multiple MBIs against each other. This approach reviews: Core, Activities, Learning, and Members – CALM.

CORE

Core refers to fidelity of MBI content. Different definitions of mindfulness exist, yet most describe mindfulness as, "Purposeful, non-judgmental, present-moment awareness". When reviewing an MBI, how is mindfulness defined? Which author(s) are cited? Another aspect is examining how well *you* align with the MBI. Introducing a new activity with students requires familiarity with the task. The same is true for MBIs and might be viewed as "practitioner fidelity". For example, if the activity calls for guided centering breathing, is this something I regularly practice? Is this something I can lead?

ACTIVITIES

Activities looks at specific actions that will take place. Similar to the Delivery component of a comprehensive program (i.e., ASCA National Model), this addresses services provided for students and which students will receive them. Reviewing the activities of an MBI calls for consideration of: developmental appropriateness for student population; time frame of the practice; and location & materials. Additionally, school counselors may assess whether the

proposed MBI should be a stand-alone activity or dove-tailed into existing guidance lessons, small group, or 1:1 sessions.

LEARNING



Learning recognizes that our work occurs within the P-12 environment. It's second nature for counselors to adjust interventions/lessons to various developmental levels, but similar attention must be given to the mission of school. Does the MBI presume clients will be in their own space or can a classroom work? Are the techniques conducive to the classroom management style of the teacher or will it cause disruption? An MBI with a strong core and activities may connect with students, but if it doesn't align with the classroom it will not promote student success.

MEMBERS

Members refers to school counseling program stakeholders. This includes students, their parents/guardians, teachers, administration, and community members. Despite the growth in mindfulness, substantial confusion

regarding what mindfulness is still exists. Review of any MBI should include time to consider how members may view the MBI and what misconceptions may arise. Just like adopting new curriculum, school counselors may solicit feedback, host "curriculum night", or upload lessons on the school website for stakeholder review.

Mindfulness practices and MBIs continue to amass research attesting to their power for facilitating client wellness. School counselors desiring to incorporate MBIs within their school counseling program need to evaluate these techniques prior to use. While this may seem a little daunting at first, all it takes is a little CALM.

Connecting On A Cart

Laura Ross
lauraruthross@gmail.com
Social Media Editor

I was inspired by an Instagram post from another school counselor who had a "mobile office day" using a rolling desk. I immediately began contemplating all the ways I could use this with my students.



First...what would I use? I didn't have a rolling desk but I did have an old hand-me-down cart on wheels. It would be perfect with my laptop on the top and a few supplies. Second...who will I see? I needed to do academic check-ins.

These are often quick conversations focused on setting goals, but when appointment passes are given out for students to come to my office the process ends up taking more time than necessary and I wanted to reach as many students as possible.

Third...when would I see them? I pulled them from academic classes. This can



sometimes be tricky, but it worked for me because the conversations didn't take long and I avoided quiz and test times. I have great relationships with my teachers and gave them notice ahead of time of what was going to happen and why, so they knew what I was doing was to support students in their classes.

Fourth...what would I need on my cart? I had my laptop to look up grades since I was doing academic check ins, printed lists of NTI (Not Turned In) assignments for students so they wouldn't be guessing about what they needed to do, a container of pens, pencils, and highlighters and some reminder tools: to-do lists, reminder wristbands, and post it notes...whatever may work for the students to remember their plan and what they needed to do! I also had a clipboard with a simple goal sheet. The

goal sheet had three areas for the student to write. 1 - Their goal. 2 - Their plan to reach their goal. They already knew what they needed to do. I was just there to remind them and be a support for them to do it. 3 - How to celebrate. If they reached their goal, how would they celebrate with me. Students chose things like with a sprite or candy. A few students chose nothing, they just wanted to reach their goals.

My focus is on connecting with my students and at first I thought this mobile office thing was just a huge benefit to me. I get to see more students, more quickly. I'm visible to teachers, administrators, and students. However, what happened was a new way of connecting with my students. **I went to them!** And that made all the difference! We had quick conversations, yes. But we had honest conversations. I saw looks on my student's faces that said "wow! you're paying attention to what is going on with me!" Students also opened up about their stress levels, their low self confidence in their academic abilities and more. *All because I went to them and essentially said 'Hey! I'm paying attention to you! I see you. Let me support you! I know you can be successful!'*

Planting Seeds for STUDENT SUCCESS through Peer Leadership

Kristi Starnes Hess
kristi.hess@hcbe.net
Middle Liaison

Greetings professional middle school counselors! In our profession, we have the unique opportunity to plant seeds for student success by utilizing our greatest



resource, students. By training and developing a core group of students, your services are vastly increased by allowing more students to be served. Peer helping has been my passion since the beginning of my counseling career. There are so many ways to utilize student leaders such as the following: tutoring, organizing, assisting teachers and office staff, supporting special needs populations, mentoring, leading transition programs, and resolving disputes. The benefits of having a peer helping program are vast and the definition and rationale for program are listed below.

Peer Helping Defined

A variety of supportive services initiated by peers in diverse settings. Peers are individuals who share common characteristics and experiences.

Common Components



*Provide training to offer a variety of services to others

*Supervised by trained adult leaders

ASCA Position Statement (2015)

Peer support programs are a means of helping students develop social/emotional competencies, define

positive values including personal responsibility, and learn pro-social behaviors. Furthermore, ASCA believes the effectiveness of school counseling programs is enhanced by the informed implementation of a peer support program, which can provide increased outreach and expansion of services.

Benefits for School Staff

- ✓ Improves school climate
- ✓ Improves communication skills
- ✓ Reduces conflict and tension between students
- ✓ Reduces discipline referrals

Benefits for Peer Helpers

- ✓ Develop communication and leadership skills
- ✓ Learn problem solving techniques to apply in diverse settings

Quality Program Standards

- ✓ Defined purpose and structured program design
- ✓ Quality training
- ✓ Service activities performed following training
- ✓ Ongoing supervision
- ✓ Evaluation to assess program's strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ Program updates as assessments

Peer Helper Selection Criteria

➤ How many? Consider budget,



- Diversity-helpers should represent a cross-section of the school community.
- Personal Qualities - communication skills, respect of peers, self-confidence, empathy, and leadership potential.
- Commitment: evaluate willingness to participate including training, meetings, after school activities, and completing missed class work.

Possible Reasons for Program Failure

- Advisor leaves school and program dissolves
- Lack of support from administration
- Advisor had little time to devote to program
- Program provided no real value to the school
- Program lacked a specific area of focus and attempted to accomplish too many tasks

School/Student Outcomes

- Improve college and career readiness



- Develop collaboration/conflict resolution skills
- Decrease behavior problems and failure rates
- Decrease feelings of isolation

I have developed and revamped my program over the years using many resources. I will gladly assist you if you are interested in starting a program. I reached out to all current GSCA members in the fall with the hope that we might collaborate and share expertise and resources. Thank you for the feedback from the survey. Middle school counselors have many common concerns. In addition, there are many colleagues willing to share expertise. Please contact me via email and let me know if you have not received email or a Slack workspace GSCA invite. Our Slack channel is titled MiddleSchool and it is a great way for middle school counselors to share ideas and problem solve via a common thread platform. I look forward to networking and sharing ideas with you.

Training

National Association of Peer Program Professionals (NAPPP)
nappp@peerprogramprofesionals.org

National Dropout Prevention Center
<http://dropoutprevention.org>



Family Matters: The Role of the Professional School Counselor in the Family Engagement Process

Kim Jackson-Allen, Ed.D.
kim.jackson-allen@sccpss.com
ASCA RAMP Chair

One of the things that seems to go specifically unnoticed for the professional school counseling is our role of the school counselor in the family engagement process. Family engagement plays an essential component in the process of the three domains of our ASCA model which provides key evidence of promoting academic, personal/social, and career domains. In programmatic planning for many of our department events, we are aware of the importance of parental involvement in helping to move our programs forward. As a veteran school counselor, it has been sometimes difficult to engage parents in the process.

Unfortunately, many of the frequent encounters that we have with parents often come when there is an immediate experience that needs to be addressed. For example, if a student is experiencing a crisis a personal crisis or for

professional school counselors in secondary settings if the student is at danger of not graduating. Both of these instances are examples of reactionary measures that are often “bandaged” to sometimes temporarily resolve a more permanent problem. And then there are the times when counseling departments schedule grade-level or specific content level nights, i.e. 9th grade parent night or PSAT nights and parents race to counselors at the in the program (sometimes it’s before it ends) to discuss concerns that they may have with their child. While this may be disruptive for counselors, it is important that we not view our parents through “deficit lens” and that we develop an advocacy plan so that all students can be successful regardless of their circumstances. Moreover, counselors should highlight the strengths of the



student and family to promote the academic, behavior, and social progress of students.

Numerous studies and research have been conducted for over the years that support the notion that those parents who are actively involved in their child’s education tend to see their child be more successful academically. To

continue such success, it is essential that we follow the advocacy of Dr. Karen L. Mapp, a senior lecturer from the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) whose primary research interest is family engagement. To summarize some of her written works, there are three critical components of successful family engagement:

1. There must be commitment from the educators involved. Family engagement should be a high priority and not considered a checklist of something that has to be done.
2. Professionally embedded training should be provided on a continual basis. It should contain high impact strategies to establish effective partnerships between home and school.
3. The mindset of family engagement and parental involvement should be shifted. It is important that we move the needle on family engagement in order for such home/school partnerships to be effective.

When these components are established and achieved, schools should expect to see student achievement and school improvement in all areas improved significantly and show continual progress in the right direction.

Counselors as Champions for Equitable Educational Access to Computer Science Learning Opportunities

Sean Myers
myers.sean.l@muscogee.k12.ga.us
William H. Spencer High School
Christy Conley
cconley@oconeeschools.org
North Oconee High School
Angela Cleveland
angela.cleveland@ncwit.org
CWIT Counselors for Computing Program Director
Catherine Roberts
catherine.roberts@clayton.k12.ga.us
GSCA Treasurer

School Counselors are at the forefront of opening doors to assist all students in pursuing the careers of their choice. Counselors connect students' interests with vital 21st-century skills, as evidenced in data shared by the World Economic Forum (<https://www.weforum.org/>). Computer Science skills are increasingly necessary for our everyday lives, like for community improvement, creative innovations in all fields, and accessibility.



Computer science is not a stand-alone skill but the common thread woven through every career and area of interest (www.ncwit.org). Technology is transforming every industry, supporting ingenuity and efficiency, empowering

students to compete in the global economy and pursue sustainable careers across all sectors. Computer science teaches students computational thinking, a systematic method of problem-solving which is critical in any industry (www.tealsk12.org/).

School Counselors are astutely aware that computer science teaches critical thinking skills that help students achieve academic, social-emotional, and career-readiness goals as outlined in the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors (www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/MindsetsBehaviors.pdf).

Essentially, computer science is not just an elective; it provides a foundation of success in life. In Georgia, if students elect to take computer science courses they can be awarded their Foreign Language requirement or meet a fourth core Math and Science credit for high school graduation (www.gadoe.org). When school counselors provide information about the intersection of computer science with every career along with pathways to learning in high school and beyond, they are empowering students to better advocate for rewarding post-secondary learning options that lead to lucrative, sustainable jobs.

School Counselors understand the importance of having positive female role models in computing. Melinda Gates has experienced the benefits of a computer science champion first-hand "For me, it all started with my high school math teacher, Susan Bauer. She convinced the nuns in charge of my all-girls school to build us a computer lab so she could teach us how to code. She could tell computers were going to transform society in our lifetimes, and she wanted us to be a part of that. There weren't a lot of people focused on

getting girls coding back in those days -- and I'm so lucky that Ms. Bauer happened to teach in my high school." (www.cnet.com/news/for-women-in-techs-male-culture-mentoring-matters-melinda-gates/).

School Counselors carve out pathways of accessibility to role models by facilitating student visits to the conferences such as the Global Women in STEM Leadership Summit. Exposing young women to strong female STEM leaders provides outlets for the students to ask questions that will impact their decision to enter and reduce attrition in these fields. School Counselors serve as robotics coaches, create pathways to all-girls computer science clubs and foster student interest in Cyber Patriots (www.uscyberpatriot.org/). Computer science can catapult students to greater academic and economic opportunities.

School Counselors are champions for equity, advocating for all students to access learning opportunities which guide them toward sustainable careers. They understand that preparing all students for meaningful career and post-secondary plans requires partnership, collaboration, and advocacy. As School Counselors engage students to be self-advocates, research suggests that School Counselors should advise students to explore the intersection of computer science with their field of interest (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers>).

Balancing Social Skills and Devices in our Tech Driven World

Rebecca Burkhart
rebecca.burkhart@sccpss.com
Middle Director



It's no surprise that in the age of social media, life is much more complicated than it was even ten years ago. Students' feelings about peers, school, and themselves has changed. Once social media came on the scene, adolescents shared online in this new social phenomenon as a way to catch up, and in some cases, keep up with peers. Competition is real, but seeing how "likes" and "follows" come in, or don't come in, can make the pressures of adolescence that much more stressful.

While technology and apps change, child development remains constant. We know children learn social cues and skills through interaction with each other. Jean Piaget and Mr. Rogers had it right when they said that play means serious learning is happening. Think about how you played as a child and adolescent- what was fun for you?

Now think about how our students prefer to play. Addiction to video games and smartphones has become a real thing. The key is teaching our students how to balance this. If your school allows devices like mine, I encourage you to put those devices to work! Also, make sure there's plenty of real "Face Time" too.

At a BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) school, access to educators is at students' fingertips. Students can learn life skills of how to email their teachers and how to request counselors. Make a Google form for requesting school counseling, then set the link to a QR code, and post in all classrooms, common areas, and even bathrooms. This makes reaching out for help that much more accessible for our students. Teach lessons about proper usage of technology and staying safe online.

Many schools now use Google Classroom. It can be as beneficial with your school counseling program. Post slideshows, announcements, and important links on each grade level's Google Classroom. Invite students and/or parents to their grade level specific Google Classroom. As you post updates, it will send an automatic notification to anyone whom is in your "Classroom." This is especially helpful for communication if you post newsletters and important updates.

Getting back to our roots of play, encourage non-tech time as well. Lunchtime and recess should be a time for practicing socialization. Host *Mix It*

Up at Lunch as a way for students to break the ice with their peers. Check out Teaching Tolerance's website for ideas and then recruit a student group to help plan. In the daily routine, encourage your teachers to host morning meetings or a brief warm up time. Teaching relaxation exercises can be beneficial, helping students to be present and focused. This will also boost confidence and self esteem.

While technology is ever evolving, the need for ever-present, passionate people in our students' lives remains. We are those people. Keep up with your own professional development to be aware of modern best practices and how to adapt for needs in our ever changing world.

Parenting in a Digital World, A Community Bands Together

Laura Spencer
Laura_Spencer@gwinnett.k12.ga.us
Secretary



The world of technology brings about wonderful advantages for our students, but also many unforeseen pitfalls. The ever changing, fast paced world of new social media apps makes it difficult for parents to stay up to date and navigate what is best for their child.

The Mill Creek Cluster made a decision to partner alongside our parents by creating a parenting workshop under the leadership of Karen Capes, a School Counselor at Puckett's Mill Elementary. At the inaugural meeting, there was a panel of experts and an inspirational speech from the Mill Creek High School Football Coach, Shannon Jarvis. The turnout was outstanding, with over 300 in attendance. In an attempt to reach even more parents, the Mill Creek High School Principals, along with the School Counselors, worked together to plan another great opportunity to impact the lives of the students we serve. The evening will consist of discussing digital trends and how they will impact our students. Along with tips, tools and apps that parents can use to ensure safety and set boundaries while online. And lastly, encouraging parents how to set and communicate boundaries with their children. Parents will be encouraged to take a bold, courageous approach in their parenting strategies. The speakers will range from School Counselors, a Digital Media Specialist, a High School Youth Pastor, a Local School Resource Officer, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Football Coach. Upper elementary and middle school students will also have an opportunity to attend a session designed specifically for their developmental level. This session will educate them on how to make wise choices in their digital world and encourage them to make those

choices. As we join forces to partner with our families, we believe our students lives will be impacted forever.

Mental Health in Schools and Using Telehealth to Open Access to Psychiatric Services

A.J. Norris
anorris@ubhsinc.com
Operations Director for United
Behavioral Health Services

Schools have become far more than the source for educating our young people and helping them become productive citizens. Today, they are often the cornerstone for communities and often take on the responsibility for the overall health and wellbeing for their students, including mental health. Students who experience depression, anxiety, and other psychological disorders perform more poorly in classes, are more likely to be absent and even drop out. In contrast, schools that take a proactive stance in addressing mental health concerns find their students more successful and the overall school environment safer.

Many schools are already working to address these issues by partnering with local community mental health centers, offering a variety of support groups, and educating parents on the need for mental health treatment for some youth; and these efforts have proven beneficial for their students. However, for students with more profound or complex mental health issues, there is often a need to seek psychiatric consultation and medications that are appropriate for treating our children and adolescents with pervasive emotional needs. The

barrier, particularly for rural areas, to this intervention is often access to consistent psychiatric particularly services that will also coordinate and communicate with school staff. United Behavioral Health Solutions (UBHS) is an example of an agency that is working to address this barrier. Our agency has spent the past seven years providing psychiatric services to rural parts of Georgia, Kentucky and South Carolina using telehealth technology. This model allows psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners access to seeing patients in multiple locations without the issues that come with travel time.

With the advancement of technology, children and teens are more and more accustomed to using programs like FACETIME to communicate and telehealth employs similar HIPAA compliant features. Schools that choose to use this service gain in several ways. They are able to access services in a quick fashion without the constraints of travel time. Additionally, using telehealth can afford the opportunity to take the time to staff cases with school professionals and parents. Telehealth components include electronic prescribing which eliminates lost prescriptions. Also, for youth in particular there are psychotropic medications that are often effective in treatment but most pediatricians are rightfully hesitant to prescribe without consultation with a psychiatrist. Without access to this service, children and adolescents may go untreated or treated with inappropriate medications and dosages. If school systems are looking to employ this model, there are several considerations to make. Those include:

how will parents participate in the psychiatric assessments and follow-up sessions; does the school have the technology and space to support



telehealth practices; does the selected provider or agency have the capacity for emergency appointments; will the telehealth provider provide documentation to the school system; and finally how easy is the process.

UBHS is an Atlanta-based psychiatric practice providing telehealth services to over 3000 patients per month. The agency employs four full-time psychiatrists, two part-time psychiatrists and ten psychiatric full-time nurse practitioners along with 20 LCSWs and Psychologists to deliver services to community counseling centers, community service boards, hospitals, schools, skilled nursing facilities and substance abuse programs. For the past two years, the agency has offered face-to-face therapy to residents at over 70 senior nursing facilities. This past year, UBHS opened its first walk-in psychiatric clinic in Atlanta, GA.

A.J. Norris is the Chief Operations Officer for UBHS. Prior to joining UBHS in 2017, he spent fifteen years leading community counseling agencies in metro-Atlanta serving at risk families and youth. He has also worked with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency in Madison, WI and with Family and Children Services in Chattanooga, TN.

Getting Involved: Not Just For School Counselors

Cameron Prostko
caurandt@valdosta.edu
Valdosta State University Graduate Student



When I first began my journey to become a Professional School Counselor, I never dreamed I would be where I am now. Going to class, getting good grades, and passing was my main goals for the next two years. Looking back now, I realize my goals and paths changed a little along the way. I began to feel like I could do more, I could be more in this role. I wasn't yet a school counselor but I still wanted to make a difference. Instead of just focusing on making good grades and getting through, I started to volunteer for different opportunities that fell in front of me. Becoming Georgia School Counselors Association's Graduate Student Liaison was one of the best opportunities that I was given. This opportunity was first brought to my

attention at the 2018 Day on The Hill. I was already on cloud nine from being able to see the amazing things that are being done at the capitol to fight for the School Counseling profession. I heard about the Graduate Student Liaison position and thought about how big of an opportunity that would be. The next week I was emailing GSCA and my teachers to see what I needed to do. Throughout the past year as I served as GSCA Graduate Student Liaison, I have had the pleasure of meeting so many wonderful people and making strong connections that will continue throughout my career. I have gained different resources that will help me as a future School Counselor. I have seen the benefits that come from being a member of different organizations. Graduate school is not just a time for students to pass their classes; it is a time to get involved and plant seeds that will help them be successful as they become future School Counselors.



School Counselors are constantly planting the seeds for success within their students. Throughout elementary, middle, and high school we are making sure that students have what they need to be successful across all domains. School counselors and teachers can also do this for our graduate students. Plant the seeds that help them to become the best future School

Counselors that they can be. Provide each student with opportunities to grow and learn. I encourage School Counseling graduate students to join GSCA, attend as many conferences as you can, and see what else you can do in your own community to get involved. I have grown so much since the first day I started my journey to become a School Counselor. Get involved and you can too!

Welcome to the Real World

Charlotte Prater
cprater@forsyth.k12.ga.us
Elizabeth Topoleski
etopoleski@forsyth.k12.ga.us

Whether you are looking for your first position or in the trenches of your first year, these tips will be helpful for you!



Securing a Counselor Position:

1. **Start Early!** Many districts are aware of openings as early as February and want to start interviewing as soon as possible to secure a candidate.
2. **Update your resume:** Make sure you add specific projects from internship. If you have data to support assignments, bring that to any interviews to demonstrate

- your dedication to a data-driven program.
3. **Attend college/district job fairs** Many colleges will have job fairs during the spring. These fairs give employers the opportunity to talk directly to candidates. Many districts will also invite you to their individual district job fairs.
 4. **Email principals/lead counselors** – Send introductory emails to principals and lead counselors to introduce yourself and express your interest in their school. They may not have an opening yet, but they will keep you in mind if something should become available.
 5. **Be flexible** - Be open to working in a few different counties or a different grade level. Once you get some experience, it will be easier to transfer because you will have connections in the district.

First Year Counseling Tips:



1. **Ask questions.** This may seem obvious, but there will be times when you may second guess

- your method of handling a situation. When in doubt, ask! As a first-year school counselor, you should not be expected to know everything. Proceeding in unknown territory is best traveled through guidance from a more experienced coworker. **Seek professional development** - Even though you have the most up-to-date understanding of school counseling as a recent graduate, there are new techniques, standards, and technologies, introduced to the profession. Attend professional development opportunities to further enhance your practice and improve your school.
2. **Introduce yourself** - From teachers who are on the front lines and seeing students daily to administration who determine much of the school day, deliver discipline, and more, to the custodians who work constantly to create a health and clean environment for students to learn, each member of the staff is vital to student success. By knowing everyone in your building, you will be more equipped to help students in multiple facets.
 3. **Find a mentor at your school** - Healthy mentorship has been vital in our success as first year school counselors. Our mentors have generously offered their time, wisdom, and experiences to answer our questions and assist us with following best practices. If you are the only school counselor at your school, seek out a mentor through GSCA.
 4. **Leave work at work** - While extremely rewarding, a career as

a school counselor is taxing to any individual. A healthy work and personal life separation is necessary for your wellness. There will be times when you need to stay, but do not make it a habit to stay late or arrive early.



Joint Enrollment, Accel, Move on When Ready, College Credit Now, or Dual Enrollment That is the Question?

G. Mark Ellis
ellisg@fultonschools.org
Secondary Director

There appears to be some confusion among Professional School Counselors regarding Joint Enrollment and Dual Enrollment. Some Counselors believe that Joint and Dual Enrollment are interchangeable terms, while other Counselors are under the impression that the name has changed from Joint Enrollment to Accel to College Credit

Now to Move on When Ready to Dual Enrollment.

Joint Enrollment is when a full time High School Student takes a course(s) at a public or private postsecondary institution and receives credit only at the postsecondary institution; while Dual Enrollment is when a High School Student takes a course(s) at a public or private postsecondary institution and receives credit at both the High School and the postsecondary institution. Currently, the Dual Enrollment Program includes: Accel (Hope Scholarship), Dual Hope Grant, and Move on When Ready. Students who apply to the Dual Enrollment Program and have been accepted to a postsecondary institution may attend college on a part-time or full-time basis. Effective 07/01/2010, all Dual Enrollment Programs will use the following guidelines to award secondary credit for postsecondary courses: One to 2 semester or 1 to 3 quarter hour credits will earn .5 High School unit credit. Three to 5 semester or 4 to 8 quarter hour credits will earn 1.0 High School unit credit.

Please go to the following website for information regarding the latest Dual Enrollment Program information: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/CTAE/Pages/FY18-Dual-Enrollment-Documents.aspx>



A Review of Career and College Readiness Counseling in P-12 Schools

Jennifer R. Curry and Amy Milsom
Lee Grimes
legrimes@valdosta.edu
Career and Post-secondary Committee
Co-chair

Authors Jennifer Curry and Amy Milsom offer in their second edition (2017) of *Career and College Readiness Counseling in P-12 Schools*, published by Springer Publishing company, a book that addresses perhaps the fastest growing domain in school counseling today, career counseling. While we continue to focus on academic and social/emotional growth for our students, school counselors today recognize that career growth is an area receiving increased focus at the state and national levels and with community stakeholders including families and business partners. Curry and Milsom, counselor educators at Louisiana State University and Clemson University respectively, bring their practitioner expertise as school counselors combined with their experience in higher education to offer a book rich with both theory and practical applications.

As a former school counselor and counselor educator today, I believe practicing school counselors can use the ideas in *Career and College Readiness Counseling in P-12 Schools* in their work in a number of ways. Curry and Milsom's first six chapters offer foundational data, current issues, cultural considerations, readiness assessment information, and career and college curriculum development ideas that could serve as shared reading in a school counseling department. This section might be used district-wide by

school counselors working together to refresh their ideas about career and college development and to create district plans for offering career counseling across levels. Additionally, the big picture of career and college development presented in this section could be used to inform presentations to school personnel and to parents as school counselors lead workshops on the important topic of career and college readiness.

Curry and Milsom also offer chapters for each grade level that present developmental considerations and career interventions to fit the needs of students. A sample of the interventions from various chapters is as follows: 1st grade), community helpers; 3rd grade), career pathways, relating work and school; 6th grade), interests and values related to a career; 10th grade), early workforce experiences; 11th grade), college visits, essay writing, and financial literacy; 12th grade), college applications, college commitment, post-secondary transition. Chapters include highlights in a section entitled *Voices from the Field*, stories of real-world school counselors sharing their interventions with tips for success. The ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors are included in these chapters as they parallel the associated growth for students at each grade level.

Curry and Milsom state in their preface that they hope both pre-service and practicing school counselors find their book helpful in identifying career and college readiness needs and appropriate interventions for students. I believe the authors of *Career and College Readiness Counseling in P-12 Schools* have met their goal with this book. The ideas can be used in a variety of formats, particularly if your

department or district is looking for a shared book study for school counselors. *Career and College Readiness Counseling in P-12 Schools* can be ordered online.

Updates for the Counselor KEYS

Robin Zorn
robinzorn@gmail.com
CKES Chair



In January of 2018, 11 of the 16 Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) Districts throughout Georgia were trained on the Counselor KEYS. This training then allows those RESA Districts to facilitate and train their local administrators and counselors on the Counselor Evaluation. Of the five RESA Districts not in attendance, our hope is that two of them will be trained at the end of this school year when those school districts are trained by us and the other RESA Districts will follow in future trainings.

College Board Scholarships

Getting into college can be complicated and overwhelming. To support students

and families, the College Board has introduced the College Board Opportunity Scholarships, a first-of-its-kind national scholarship program. It's unique because it serves as a simple college planning guide for all students. It explains what to do and when to do it.

The College Board Opportunity Scholarships lay out six simple steps that all students can take to get into college. Completing each step will earn a chance for a scholarship; completing all six will earn students a chance to win \$40,000 for their college education. The six steps in this program help students plan by making a good starter college list, help them prepare so they can take their best shot, and help them pay for college. The six actions are:

1. **Building a College List**—Students get started by exploring colleges they're interested in.
2. **Practicing for the SAT**—Students use Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy to get ready for test day.
3. **Improving SAT Scores**—Students show how practice pays off by improving their SAT scores.
4. **Strengthening Their College List**—Students make sure their college list is a mix of academic safety, fit, and reach schools.
5. **Completing the FAFSA**—Students fill out the free government form to apply for financial aid.
6. **Applying to Colleges**—Students apply to the schools they want to attend. The College Board Opportunity

Scholarships are different from other scholarship programs because they're about how much students grow, not how high they score. The College Board Opportunity Scholarships don't require an essay or an application and don't have a minimum GPA or SAT score requirement. Instead, the program rewards all students' efforts and actions on their way to college. The more effort that students put in and actions they complete, the more chances they have to earn a college scholarship.

The College Board is investing \$25 million over five years. A total of \$5 million is available for each graduating class, beginning with the class of 2020. All students are invited.

Students can sign up at CB.org/Opportunity. The program officially launches in December. However, students can start today by going to BigFuture to make a starter list of six colleges they're interested in. Just by making that list, students earn a chance for a \$500 scholarship. Then students can take the next step toward earning a \$40,000 scholarship by going to SATPractice.org to receive free, personalized practice on Khan Academy.



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Building 14, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30339

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