

# The Pennsylvania

# COUNSELOR

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EDITION



## School Counselors Leaders in a Changing World



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## PRESIDENT'S *message*



Greetings, School Counselors!

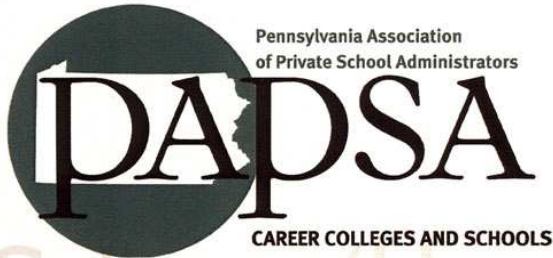
I do my best thinking and often my best planning, over a cup of coffee. Maybe you do to. Long after finishing my coffee from a local Starbucks, this quote by Youssou N'Dour stayed on my mind. It's funny how a quote on a coffee cup can provide so much meaning.

*People need to see that far from being an obstacle, the world's diversity of languages, religions and traditions is a great treasure, affording us precious opportunities to recognize ourselves in others.*

In our schools we are bringing together students with diverse cultures, ethnic groups, families, and customs. As school counselors, we are trying to bridge the gap between our students so that they can recognize the richness and opportunities that exist in our differences and similarities. Sometimes our outlook is so hopeful and at other times we see that others lack the acceptance of differences that we wish they would possess. Nonetheless, we still try to close the gap.

The achievement gap is another space we are looking to fill. When we view the achievement of our diverse student population we need to consider how to close the divide. The professional school counselor looks at the gaps and through data collection, data review, and intentional programming, facilitates change. As school counseling leaders it is our responsibility to look at our school population, use data-driven decision making to close the gaps and bridge the missing links through services and skills that lead to increased student achievement.

The school year is not over yet. Although it feels like the days are slipping by and summer vacation is around the corner, there is still time. Still time to evaluate your counseling program, assess the needs of your stakeholders, use the data in your planning, and create change. Have a cup of coffee and get to work. There is still so much we can do!



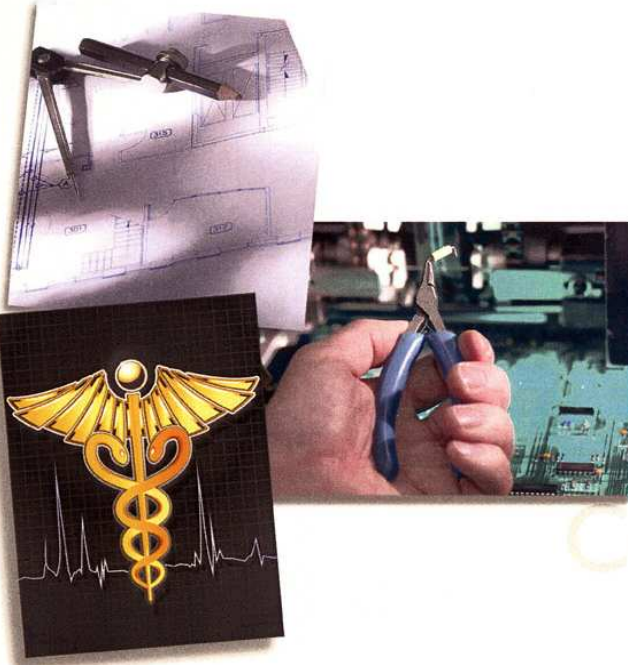
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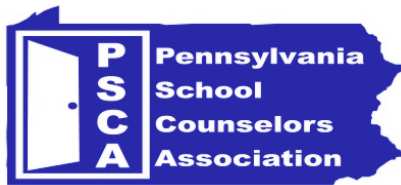
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# Executive DIRECTOR'S *Column*

Dr. Judith Bookhamer, PSCA Executive Director

"School Counselors: Leaders in a Changing World" is a theme that's taken on new meaning and new challenges in the past few months. The global economy is facing a critical challenge. World, national and local leaders are coming together to address the challenges.

In a recent address to the Nation President Obama admonished that the "day of reckoning has arrived" and challenged that "the time to take charge of our future is here." He stressed that investing in education "will grow our economy" and urged us to "expand the promise of education in America." He underscored that, "In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity -- it is a prerequisite."

Governor Rendell, recognized nationally as an "education governor," is committed to creating a first-rate public education system in Pennsylvania. "Building a world-class workforce requires a world-class education - and that means a postsecondary degree," the Governor told attendees at Pennsylvania's first-ever conference on higher education access, affordability and success. Governor Rendell continues to make every high school diploma a ticket for success by ensuring that every student is equipped with 21st century skills and has access to increased academic quality and rigor, greater opportunity to earn college credit, and more personal counseling and support. Governor Rendell, through Project 720 and the "College and Career Counseling" grants has emphasized counseling as a key component of the offering of Pennsylvania's schools. The ultimate education goal of the Rendell administration is to guarantee that Pennsylvania's schools prepare all students for college and career success in a global economy.

We know that seventy-five percent of the fastest-growing occupations require more than a high school diploma. Yet, statistics support that only a little more than fifty percent of the population has earned a high school diploma. United States' high school drop-out rates are among the highest among industrialized nations, and some reports indicate that a student drops out of school at the alarming rate of one every twenty-six seconds! President Obama describes the scenario as a "prescription for economic decline." In the changing world, the "countries that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow." There is indeed a new mission of schools - to educate ALL students to high levels....and we know that is not happening everywhere!

Carolyn Stone, a Past-President of the American School Counselor Association, peppers her presentations with "not on my watch" declarations. Well, my fellow counselors, it is not just Carolyn's watch! It is OUR "watch," and we all need to respond to and be a part of the increasing accountability that has become the cornerstone of educational reform.

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**Executive Director's Column**  
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School counselors must respond to the challenge of our President and other leaders...indeed to the challenges of the time. We must take charge of our future...a future that encompasses not only our personal and professional lives but also the lives of the populations that we serve.

In this era of high stakes education reform school counselors can play a significant role in school improvement efforts. Through effective collection and analysis of data and collaborative work with faculty, school counselors can identify key improvement projects that eliminate barriers and build bridges to learning for all students. School counselors must link to the instructional program and student achievement.

President Obama emphasized that education programs that don't work will be ended. School counselors must be prepared to demonstrate that school counseling programs do work! School counselors must be able to demonstrate...using action research techniques...how student achievement is impacted by the programs they implement and the collaborations they undertake. School counselors must overcome the fear of the use of data. School counselors must learn strategies for building accountability standards into counseling programs. School counselors must learn how to design and implement accountable programs and how to measure and report results.

School counselors must embrace the opportunities that data presents and must use data to evidence that school counseling programs work...that school counselors make a difference! "School Counselors: Leaders in a Changing World!"...a challenge and an opportunity!

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## COUNSELORS SPEAK OUT: MEMBERS ONLY!

### The Second Mile

My name is Leigha Galgan and I am a Director of Programs for the Second Mile. The Second Mile is a nonprofit organization serving the youth of Pennsylvania. At The Second Mile, we are committed to helping young people achieve their potential as individuals and as community members and providing education and support for their parents and youth service professionals. Our programs, which are free of cost, fall under three categories; prevention, early intervention, and community service. The intention of this letter is to provide you with information about one of our prevention programs, Nittany Lion Tips, and how your school can get involved.

Nittany Lion Tips are sets of sports trading cards featuring Penn State athletes who offer a positive message or word of encouragement about issues of normal development. These cards are provided to counselors and caseworkers to use in their work with elementary and middle school students. Each year, The Second Mile produces two editions of 25 cards each - the Fall Edition, featuring Penn State football team members, and the Winter Sports Edition, featuring wrestling, men's and women's basketball, and men's and women's gymnastics.

The Tips football cards were first printed in 1988. In the winter of 1989-90 we added the winter set, which included female athletes, in response to the feedback we requested from the counseling professionals using this tool. The issues that the athletes address continue to be chosen based upon this ongoing feedback. Therefore, the issues tackled by the cards are both timely and diverse. In a recent set, they included the following: dealing with divorce or the death of a loved one; what action to take if you find a gun or have a friend who is depressed or suicidal; how to set short and long-term goals; and the importance of not judging others based upon appearance, national origin, or religious affiliation.

The cards are accompanied by a Facilitator's Guide, which includes activity sheets and behavioral contracts, as well as ideas that counselors have generated for their peers regarding different ways to use Tips. The thousands of counselors using the cards and the guide have consistently rated Nittany Lion Tips as "effective" to "very effective."

*Continued on Page 5*

**The Second Mile**  
Continued from Page 4

If you are interested in receiving the next edition of Nittany Lion Tips please send an email to Karen Zawitkowski at [karen@thesecondmile.org](mailto:karen@thesecondmile.org). Please include your name, phone number, school, and school address or call 814-237-1719. If you would like information on other Second Mile programs please visit our website [www.thesecondmile.org](http://www.thesecondmile.org).

Sincerely,  
Leigha Galgan, Director of Programs, The Second Mile

### Appreciation Expressed

Mr. Jay D. Cannon  
State Administrator for Career Counseling Service  
Bureau of Career and Technical Education  
PA Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Mr. Cannon,

On behalf of the Boys & Girls Clubs of WPA, Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 Partnership, we wish to express our sincere thanks and gratitude for your continued professional support of our Project 720 *Educators and Employers Engaged for Excellence (E4)* Act 48 Professional Development career systems building model.

The four-day workshop has involved teams of 6-8 educators per district from 22 school districts in Allegheny County over a two-year period. The workshops focus on the Portfolio requirements outlined in the *PDE Academic Standards for Career Education and Work*. They also assist districts with the development of a complete "career system" for all students. Your *state-of-the-art* resources have served as the very foundation of the professional development infrastructure. Employers are now encouraged to form partnerships with local school districts to create future employment opportunities for youth. Last year, over 8,000 eighth graders developed their first CEW Portfolio.

On behalf of all the districts, I wish to thank you for the high caliber of resources that you have in place on [www.pacareerstandards.com](http://www.pacareerstandards.com). The resources and cross references are amazing in scope and usefulness and have been the anchor for everyone's Project 720 career systems building. Jay, we were thrilled to have you participate in our workshop several weeks ago. It was wonderful to hear such an inspirational and passionate plea for all children's successful workplace preparation...Yes...all that you do and have done...

does truly make a difference for our children...Thank you Jay...for a career of giving to educators and children...

Sincerely,  
Dr. Terri Henderson  
Director of Education and Workforce Development  
**Counseling Scene Investigation**

## ISSUES: COUNSELORS ON THE cutting edge

Who are we? We really want to know. This variation of the popular lyrics from "The Who" opens every show of the now famous CSI series. Now consider that the C-S-I acronym represents **C**ounseling **S**cene **I**nvestigation as we explore the ever-changing counseling role in our schools. Now more than ever, we must hone our assessment and problem-solving skills, fine tune our research and analytical abilities and develop a keen awareness of our social condition. We are the response team. We are the specialists.

**Come and join your colleagues on Tuesday, October 6, 2009, from 8:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m. at the Westmoreland Community College. The Westmoreland County School Counselors Association in conjunction with the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association will provide you with a wide array of workshops to help you define your changing role. Keynote speakers, Father Scott Seethaler and Dr. Ed Jacobs will also help you investigate who you are while encouraging you as you continue on your counseling journey.**

Workshops are designed to promote awareness and will address focus areas such as:

- Career Education and Work Standards
- Financial Forensics – Real World Strategies for Counselors
- Resiliency
- Transitional Services/Freshman Academy
- Autism/Asperger's
- Eating Disorders/Emo Culture/Self-Mutilation
- Differentiated Counseling
- Relational Aggression

Who are you? We know who you are. You are the healers and visionaries who will bring hope to our future. Contact: Bonita Kline at [klineba@comcast.net](mailto:klineba@comcast.net) for more information.

**Pennsylvania School Counselors Association  
Kutztown University College of Education  
2009 School Counselor Academy East**

**IDEAS Data Based Decision Making  
Advocacy  
July 13 - 14, 2009 at Kutztown University**

The 2009 School Counselor Academy East will focus on giving practicing school counselors realistic tools that will enable them to be at the center of the new mission of schools - to educate all students to high levels.

Using **data** is an integral part of 21<sup>st</sup> century school counseling practice. The academy will provide you with the knowledge, skills, and tools to find and use the best available data as quickly (and painlessly) as possible. Monday's workshop will have 'hands-on' activities designed to give you a chance to apply and practice what you are learning throughout the day. While not required, you may bring your own surveys and data to examine as part of the day's activities. Attendees are encouraged to bring a laptop. By developing strong **advocacy** skills school counselors can champion student success in addition to speaking on behalf of their own guidance program during this time of major education change and pressure. Learn how to show that what you do as a school counselor does make a significant difference in student achievement. Learn how to model your program to bring about systemic change and preserve your proper role as a school counselor.

The presenters are Tim Poynton, IDEAS for Data Driven Decision Making, and Jim Bierma, Advocacy. Tim is an assistant professor and director of the school counseling program at Suffolk University in Boston. A former school counselor in New York State, Dr. Poynton has shifted the focus of his work from practicing school counseling to school counselor education and research. He worked as a research fellow at the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research, and is the developer of *EZAnalyze*, a data analysis tool for school counselors. Jim is President of ASCA, Lead Counselor for Minneapolis Public Schools, an adjunct professor at University of Minnesota and a counselor/tutor at homeless shelters. His website at [mis.spps.org/counselors](http://mis.spps.org/counselors) contains 80 articles and 230 school counseling lessons that he has written. He was a co-writer for the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) School Counselor Standards. He was a member of three school counseling teams that implemented the ASCA National Model and produced positive systemic change.

Fees are \$155 for PSCA members, \$210 non-members, \$145 district team member (Team registrations must be mailed together, 3 person minimum on team; at least two team members must be PSCA members in order to receive team rate), \$85 Graduate Student (Graduate student registration for PSCA Student Members Only. To join PSCA as a student member, go to [www.pscaweb.org](http://www.pscaweb.org).)

The registration form and additional information is available at [www.pscaweb.org](http://www.pscaweb.org). Contact Patti Deutsch at [pattipsca@gmail.com](mailto:pattipsca@gmail.com) with questions.

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\*See the public television broadcast schedule at [www.pct.edu/degrees-that-work](http://www.pct.edu/degrees-that-work). If the series is not available in your viewing area, contact your public television station and request that it broadcast the series.

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## School Counselors: Essential to Achievement Gap Initiatives

Jaye Pedante, PSCA Past President

My school district is a member of the Delaware Valley Minority Student Achievement Consortium, a network of 28 suburban school districts and 3 county intermediate units in the Greater Philadelphia region that are committed to working together to enhance the achievement and well-being of all of their students. The Consortium seeks to measurably and appreciably reduce the disparities in achievement and school engagement between African American and Hispanic students and their Caucasian and Asian peers within and among the collective Consortium districts. We are in the company of school districts in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware who participate in meetings, conferences, and activities that shine a light on the issue of racial disparities in our educational systems and practices and give us tools to make changes that improve the achievement of all students. One of the targeted groups for involvement is school counselors and the vital role we play in helping each student succeed. We are masters at individualizing education for our students, at recognizing unique as well as systemic barriers to success, and offering strategies that render those barriers powerless.

In January I attended a workshop for school counselors with two of my school counselor colleagues. The title was "Building Equitable Schools: Culturally Competent School Counselors as Leaders and Advocates" presented by Vivian Lee and Pat Martin from the College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy. The focus was on adding to the school counselor's tool chest of skills and strategies to improve the college-going rates for all of our underserved populations. We must create an environment in which all of our students can see themselves in college, are familiar with college vocabulary, and have access to the coursework, activities, and resources that give them the foundation for college admission and degree completion. We not only must provide them with the academic capital, but the social capital they need to be successful. Those of us who have had the college experience may take for granted the acquisition of "college language", a crucial component of that social capital. Vivian Lee asked the group what the word "suitemate" means and how we came to know that term. We all knew that a suitemate is a roommate, and we knew that because we had been to college. These are things we don't always think of when we are helping students fill the gaps in their college readiness, but they are important factors in why students may not feel comfortable in the college environment and are therefore unsuccessful. These are issues that school counselors can address in programming and resources for both students and parents, and the earlier we begin

the better. An elementary counselor attended this workshop with me, and initially she was skeptical about the relevance for the K – 4 population. By lunchtime she was feverishly jotting down ideas of things we could easily begin implementing through both the guidance curriculum and in school wide activities that will help all students prepare for college in all forms.

The Consortium also offers workshops for students each semester, one for middle school and one for high school. These are excellent opportunities for students to hear from renowned motivational speakers as well as student panels who share their own stories and words of encouragement. Salome Thomas-El, one of our keynoters at the 2008 PSCA Conference, has been presenting at this year's high school conferences, and he is just as inspirational and motivating for the students as he is for adults. It is an exceptional program. If your district is not involved and you would like to be, contact Dr. Robert L. Jarvis at the Penn Center for Educational Leadership, Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, email address [rjarvis@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:rjarvis@gse.upenn.edu). The cross-district collaboration is powerful. We all are engaging in some successful practices and the sharing of these ideas is helping us all become more effective with all of our students. The Achievement Gap is real, and school counselors must take the lead in eliminating it once and for all.

## *Informing the Profession*

### **An Investigation of Student Participation in a Graduation Project, Achievement Goals, and Career Exploration Endeavors**

Melissa Ostrowski M.Ed.  
Penn Manor School District

Sandra Deemer, Ph.D.  
Millersville University of Pennsylvania

Educators in secondary settings are struggling with the problem of how to help students engage in meaningful career exploration and how to foster positive beliefs and behaviors that will lead to post-secondary success. Schools feel pressure to meet demands included in the accountability measures stipulated in NCLB. In Pennsylvania, educators are mandated to not only have students meet AYP on state assessments, but they are also now expected to engage students in long-

*Continued on Page 10*

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Graduate Project  
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term graduation projects that demonstrate students' capabilities to utilize critical thinking and problem solving skills as they plan for their future. According to the *Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Career Education and Work* (2006), the economic future of our state depends on having citizens who can contribute to a "...rapidly changing workplace and the demand for continuous learning and innovation..." (p.3). The following is the description of a research project that provides a model of how to evaluate the effectiveness of a career oriented graduation project

Students completed a survey when they began the graduation project during their sophomore year. The survey included questions related to students' perceptions of goals associated with their graduation project (PALS, Midgley et al., 2000). This survey has been utilized in high school settings and has shown that two different perceptions of tasks can be represented by these items; several items refer to perceptions reflecting an emphasis on mastery goals while other items describe perceptions emphasizing performance goals. Students' sense of school belonging was assessed using the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale developed by Goodenow (1991). It includes such items as, "I feel like a real part of this school." Information on current career exploration endeavors was also gained from an 11-item survey created jointly by the researcher and school personnel.

Students' mean responses across survey items revealed that they are engaging in various aspects of the graduation project and generally perceive that their involvement is aiding them in future planning. Students reported receiving adequate support from teachers and counselors in understanding and completing aspects of the graduation project. Perceptions about school belongingness were generally favorable.

Focus group interviews were conducted. Included were open ended questions about perceptions on the value and structure of the graduation project. Students reported that the graduation project was well-intentioned, but that they were confused as to what exactly was required. When asked how the project is helping them plan for the future, students revealed that it was aiding them in researching colleges that would be appropriate for their career interests. Students revealed that additional support and explanation is needed related to the specific requirements of the graduation project (e.g., community service). Specifically, students indicated that they were often unsure how to locate community service that was related to their career interests. Finally, most students reported positive feelings about academic and social elements of the school.

The initial findings of this three-year study uncover how students can be productively engaged in career

exploration through a long-term graduation project that situates learning about future possibilities within real-world experiences. By requiring students to complete online interest inventories, interview employees in their fields of interest, and to shadow employees in the workplace, students are likely to develop an understanding of what path they must take to achieve their future goals. The informative feedback provided by these findings should aid the school district in responding to students' needs related to the project and eventually provide the basis for a "best practice" model of how to design and implement career oriented graduation projects.

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## An Intern, Help or Hindrance: Important Questions for Site Supervisors to Consider

Kayla Snyder, Graduate Assistant Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Kimberly Desmond, Ph.D., LPC,NCC,  
Assistant Professor of Counseling

Have you ever considered taking on the role of an internship site supervisor? Internship site supervisors are crucial in the school counselor education training process. From the dedication of experienced school counselors, interns have the opportunity to apply the information they've read about and learned in their classes to actual field experience. While often times professionals and facilities welcome interns into their community, the internship process can be most valuable to both the intern and site supervisor if the expectations are agreed upon prior to the experience. Determining these expectations can be done with an interview between the potential intern and the site supervisor.

Even with an interview, how will the school counselor decide what questions to ask in order to make an

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**Intern****Continued from Page 10**

Informed decision? Accordingly, the following questions can serve as a guide to help the site supervisor discuss many of the components that will play an important role in selecting an appropriate intern and altogether having a positive experience.

**What are the requirements of the university?**

This is a key question when meeting with the potential intern so it is explicit as to what should be expected from the school as well as from the intern. One important component to consider is the total number of internship hours required and the number of required hours for site supervisor supervision. Discussing this at the first meeting allows the school counselor to determine if there is time in the day to provide adequate supervision that can be beneficial for both the school counselor and intern. A second factor to consider is the total number of hours needed for direct contact with clients, including group and individual contact. It is essential for the school to be able to adequately offer the number of hours needed so that efforts can be made to avoid complications during the internship process. The topic of video or tape recordings can also arise with this matter. Some universities may require recordings of sessions; however, this is dependent upon the school's policy along with the student and parent's consent. The final aspect to consider is how involved the faculty supervisor from the university will be in the internship process: Will they be completing site visits, observations, and/or telephone calls?

**What are the student's expectations/ goals for the internship?**

By discussing the potential intern's expectations and goals, the school counselor can gain a sense of the student's aspirations. The school counselor can consider if the school is an appropriate placement to help the student meet his/her goals. In addition, the school counselor could also begin thinking of ways to offer opportunities that would facilitate attainment of the goals. It can also be valuable to collaborate with the intern to create a list of goals, both long term and short term, so there are agreed upon guidelines and expectations to pursue early in the process.

**Why did you choose this site? What attracted you?**

Allowing the potential intern to explain their motivation for pursuing the particular school site can also be beneficial. First, the supervisor can learn about specific aspects of the school that are attractive and stand out to school counseling students. In addition, the school counselor is gaining information about how the characteristics

set the school apart from other sites. Second, the school counselor can evaluate how well the school and potential intern "match up." More specifically, is the school counselor site supervisor able to provide the opportunities the student is seeking in the internship experience? Having an open dialogue about this can clear up any false impressions the intern may have about the school environment.

**What are your career goals after earning your degree?**

This may be an important consideration if the school district is hiring a counselor in the near future. It may be helpful to let the student know that there is a potential opening in the district. This question will also inform the school counselor and intern if the school is appropriate for his/her aspirations.

**What are your strongest interests in the field of counseling?**

Interests can play an important role in the beginning stages of the internship process. More than likely, an intern will be more comfortable starting on tasks where his/her interests are the strongest, so discussing areas of interest can help set a baseline for the beginning work stages.

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Continued on Page 11

### Intern

Continued from Page 11

#### What theories most closely reflect your own beliefs?

It is important to gain an understanding of the potential intern's theoretical orientation. It is also recommended that the school counselor share his/her theoretical orientation with the student. A discussion could then ensue about how the various theoretical perspectives could impact the internship experience. In addition, the school counselor and potential intern could discuss how they might learn from each other regarding the various perspectives.

#### How would you describe a comprehensive school counseling program?

This question could be important for the school counselor to assess whether or not the intern's concept of a school counseling program matches the current school counseling curriculum. The school counselor could also gain valuable information about the intern's knowledge about comprehensive school counseling programs.

#### What counseling experiences have you had up to this point?

Prior experience can help inform need for advanced knowledge and skills in particular areas. This question may also help the school counselor determine what level of supervision the intern may require. In addition, the student may be able to provide a level of expertise that is needed in the school.

#### What are your strengths and weaknesses as a school counseling student?

Strengths and weaknesses can be an important part of evaluating fit for internship placement. By gaining knowledge of student strengths the school counselor may determine whether those strengths would be an asset in that particular school system. By knowing areas that are particularly challenging for the student, the site supervisor may determine if they have the necessary time and skills to assist the intern.

#### In what way can I be most helpful to you?

There may be a few areas where the prospective intern feels somewhat unprepared, unqualified, or has very little confidence with tasks in which their experience is scarce. This will give the intern an opportunity to explain ways you can serve as a resource as well as marking areas where information would be valued even if

he/she is confident in the counselor role.

Overall, discussing requirements, beliefs, interests, goals, and expectations will help the site supervisor to learn a great deal about the potential intern. From these questions an understanding can be gained about how the intern will fit with the particular school system. Having an open dialogue with the counseling student about needs and expectations can provide information for the school counselor. The school counselor may become clearer on what opportunities are available to the intern, and also what an intern may offer to the comprehensive school counseling program.

#### References

Sweitzer, H.F. & King, M.A. (2004). The successful in-

### Pennsylvania School Counselors Association

*The mission of the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association is to expand the image and influence of professional school counselors, to promote professional and ethical practice, and to advocate for equity and access for all students.*

*Goal 1: Provide professional development relevant to the current and emerging practices of professional school counseling.*

*Goal 2: Initiate and support relevant research and evaluation in professional school counseling.*

*Goal 3: Advocate for the role and programs of professional school counselors*

*Goal 4: Define and promote professional and ethical standards that guide the conduct and practices of professional school counselors.*

*Goal 5: Identify and implement an organizational structure that facilitates the accomplishment of the mission and goals in a fiscally optimal manner.*



**UNIT REPS:**

## What's Happening in Allegheny County and ACCA?

Emilia Peiffer, IU #3 Representative

The Allegheny County Counselors Association (ACCA), which includes counselors from IUs #2 and #3, has been very dynamic this year in providing quality professional development activities for its members. Through four meetings per year, the ACCA is able to provide not only these educational opportunities to its members, but also the chance to network with other school counselors in the county. Student members are often informed of professional positions that are available to them. We also take the time to honor our retired members for their many years of service to the school counseling profession.

Our first meeting this year was held on October 13, 2008. The Keynote speaker was our very own Dr. Judith Bookhamer, who highlighted the ASCA National Model of School Counseling. She then related it back to this year's PSCA Conference theme – "School Counselors: Leaders in a Changing World". There were also a variety of breakout sessions that were offered to those members who were present. Dr. Susan Tarasevich of UPMC and WPIC (Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic) discussed confidentiality and other ethical dilemmas for school counselors. "Straight Talk About Cancer" was a workshop offered by Gilda's Club of Western Pennsylvania. In addition, Amy Black from Crisis Center North in Allegheny County offered programming for schools dealing with students and trauma. Suicide assessment and treatment was also taught by Dr. Lonich from California University of PA. There were several educational workshops given by the professors from Indiana University of PA: Adolescent Depression by Dr. John McCarthy, Understanding ADHD and Homework Strategies by Dr. L'Amoreaux, and Dream Exploration for Students by Dr. Witchel. IUP was one of our sponsors for this meeting, along with the University of Akron.

The next meeting of the year was held on December 16, 2008 at Point Park University. We had two educational seminars at this meeting. The morning session was presented by Comprehensive Drug Solutions, Inc. Their company has developed substance abuse assessment training for police officers and other individuals (such as educators) who play a key role in

early intervention with substance abusers. The afternoon session was presented by Allegheny County Children, Youth and Family Services (CYFS). The intake supervisor updated us on changes that have been made in the child welfare law and their reporting procedures. We were apprised of the meaning and responsibility of a "mandated reporter".

The third meeting of the year was held at the Bradford School in Pittsburgh on March 6, 2009. The topics of that meeting were: School Violence Prevention by Denise Holtz, Special Agent with the FBI, Pittsburgh Division; The Effectiveness of Student Retention by Mariellen Kerr, Past President of ACCA and PSCA's 2006 Elementary School Counselor of the Year; and Helping to Connect Kids to Colleges by Go Far USA.

As you can see, ACCA is a vibrant organization that offers a plethora of professional development opportunities on a wide variety of topics that are all relevant to today's school counselor. If you are a school counselor in Allegheny County but are not a member of ACCA, you should visit us on the web at [www.twuclan.net/acca/](http://www.twuclan.net/acca/) (there is also a link to our website on PSCA's website). There, you can register to become a member. If you do, you can join us at our final meeting on May 11, 2009, sponsored by the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). Our Keynote speaker will be Bernie Hoffman, who is a leading expert on school law. Of course, he will address those legal and ethical issues that are often faced by school counselors. It will be another informative meeting. We hope to see you there.

## IU 20 News

Terry Krebs, IU #20 Representative

Greetings from IU 20 counselors! This is my first year as IU 20 representative. We have joined forces with the newly formed Colonial Intermediate School Counselors Association. We have held 2 meetings thus far. In September we had Bernie Hoffman speak concerning legal issues affecting counselors. In February we had Amaal Awadalla, Asst. Director of Curriculum Services for math and Science at IU 20, and Leann Kriner, School Counselor from Emmaus School District, speak about Career Pathways. We have one more meeting scheduled for the spring. Many thanks to Nicole Richards for getting this newly formed organization up and running.



# News

## COUNSELORS Can Use

### Character Camp 2009: A Different Kind of Summer Camp

Integrity, interpersonal communication skills, diversity training - not the typical topics covered at a summer camp. However, Character Camp 2009, to be held at Penn State University's Stone Valley Recreation Area from June 17 - 19, is no ordinary experience.

Approximately sixty high school students from schools throughout Pennsylvania will participate in the three-day experience that focuses on sharpening the leadership skills and personal character of these rising freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors.

Character Camp, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, was co-founded by Dr. Robert Orndorff, associate director of Penn State University's Career Center, and brother Erik

Orndorff, Principal at Pequea Valley Middle School. The content of the camp is based on Dr. Orndorff's book, "Becoming the Best Me," in which he discusses the traits and skills students need to be successful in life as well as in their chosen careers. In the first three years of the camp, the students made the pages of the book come to life with their enthusiastic and genuine participation in the discussions and activities.

Character campers participate in a packed schedule of experiential activities, discussion groups, and a varied array of team competitions (volleyball, canoe relay races, karaoke competition) that focus on honing the skills highlighted in "Becoming the Best Me". The campers are also able to put their newly sharpened skills to work at camp when a group of fifty 5 - 10 year old "littles" from a local Big Brother/Big Sister camp visit Character Camp. The high school students serve as role models for the younger children as they work their way through games involving communication skills, cooperation, and trust building.

Each character camper is given copies of "Becoming the Best Me" and is charged with the task of becoming a character advocate and taking the message back to their school counselors and principals. "Don't leave it at the camp," Dr. Orndorff repeats to the students during the closing ceremonies. He encourages campers, "Take what you know and spread the word."

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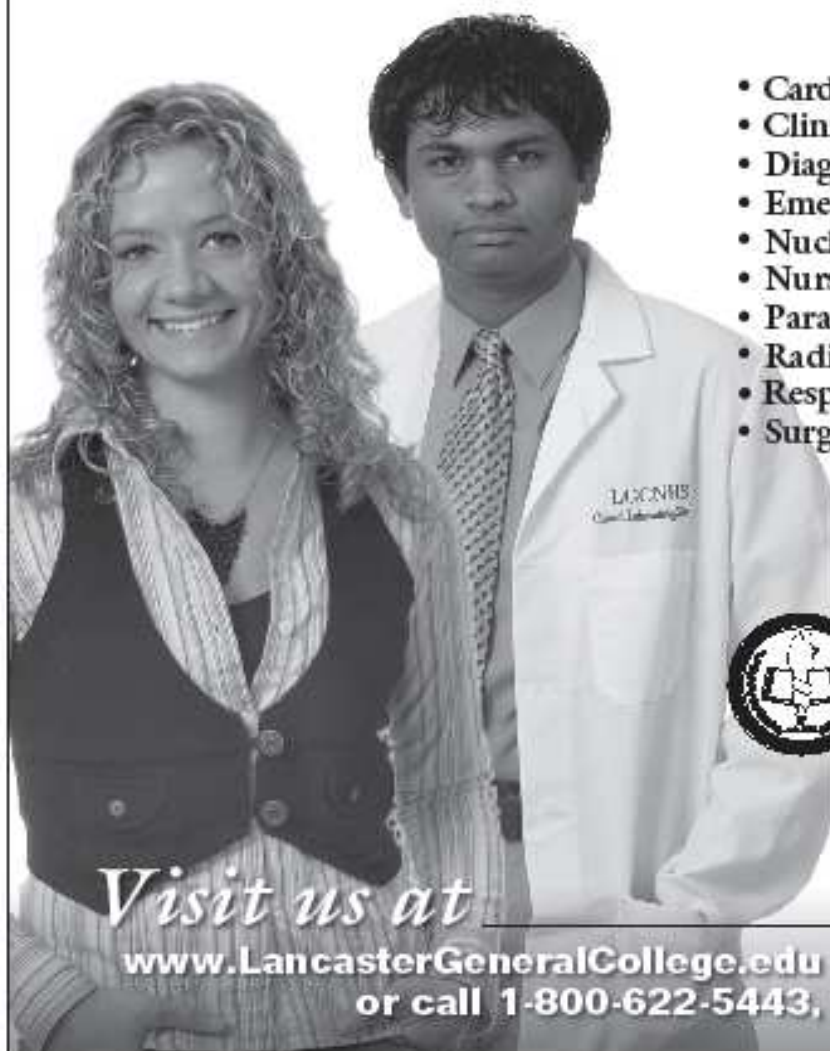
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## Closing the Implementation Gap

Norman C. Gysbers, PhD.

November 22, 2005, Reprinted by permission of the American School Counselor Association

Over the past few years a number of gaps have been identified in our educational system, gaps between what is expected of the system vs. what actually happens. Foremost among the gaps being discussed today is the student achievement gap, primarily because of the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Closing the student achievement gap has become a national priority for all educators including school counselors.

Critical for school counselors' success in working to close the student achievement gap is a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program. Why? Because the major goals of a fully implemented program and the work of school counselors in it are to help all students connect to school, feel they are a part of school, develop a sense of belongingness and engagement, have high academic and career expectations and feel safe in school physically and emotionally. When students are connected to school they are more motivated, engaged, and, as a result, they do better academically.

Many local districts, working with the support of state departments of education, state school counselor organizations and counselor education programs, are making substantial progress in developing comprehensive school counseling programs. They are developing written programs, and some are also making progress in implementing various aspects of these programs. However, based on my work with many school districts, I believe there are serious gaps in implementing these programs. I believe we have a program implementation gap that requires immediate professional attention.

Let's take a look at what program implementation gaps are, why they exist, how we can close them and the benefits of closing such implementation gaps.

### The Implementation Gap

A program implementation gap is the difference between a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program in a district and one that is in the development stage. Something has been written to describe the district's program, but the district has only partially implemented it or hasn't implemented it at all.

Implementation gaps exist because comprehensive programs are hard to implement. The task of planning and designing a district-wide comprehensive school

counseling program is difficult enough, but actually putting it into place is even more difficult. The difficulty in fully implementing a comprehensive school counseling program is often due to one of three reasons: the weight of tradition, resistance to change and the burden of non-school-counseling-related tasks.

**The weight of tradition:** School counseling had its origins in the early 1900s with the appointment of teachers to the position of vocational counselor. No organizational structure was in place to organize their work other than a list of duties. In the 1930s and 1940s, organizational concerns about the position and list of duties approach led to the creation of the services model. At this time, school counselors' work was organized around a set of guidance and counseling services and was placed within the broader structure of pupil personnel services.

By the late 1960s, the comprehensive program approach to school counseling began to evolve. Today, the position approach and service model of the past are being transformed and incorporated into comprehensive programs. The positions of school counselors and the services provided remain and are necessary, but they are now being embedded into the organizational structure of comprehensive programs.

Because of the length of time the position approach and service model were the ways in which school counseling was provided in schools, the work of moving to a comprehensive school counseling program goes slowly. Even today some school counselors, teachers, administrators and parents see school counselors working individually in their buildings, sometimes independently from other school counselors in the district. Their organizational structure still revolves around a list of duties provided by administration. In this context school counselors are often seen as office people, not program people.

**Resistance to change:** Resistance to change is often defined as wanting to maintain the status quo. Some people resist by refusing to do anything. Others sit on the sidelines criticizing but not participating. Some may try to keep others from participating in any change.

The fear of change often lies behind resistance to change, and we must take this human condition into consideration. The failure of some staff members to embrace a program approach can be appreciated if we understand their original justification for existence and their current functions and operational patterns. Many school counselors, for example, maintain they are trapped and can react only minimally to change. They say they are

*Continued on Page 17*

## **Implementation Gap** **Continued from Page 16**

victims of school rigidity and bureaucracy that place them in positions to provide quasi-administrative and services functions that impede them from fully implementing comprehensive school counseling programs.

**The burden of non-school-counseling-related tasks:** Although comprehensive school counseling programs are becoming a reality in many school districts, the changeover is not yet complete. School counselors are often unable to spend 100 percent of their time carrying out fully implemented comprehensive school counseling programs as they are still expected to fulfill multiple, often conflicting, roles. In addition to their appropriate school-counseling-related duties, they are often also expected to be testing coordinators, develop master schedules, do assessment and case management work for special education and be responsible for various administrative and clerical duties.

In many districts school counselors often are spending 20 percent to 40 percent of their time carrying out inappropriate tasks. Although school counselors do have fair-share responsibilities, just like any other faculty member, the tasks many school counselors perform go substantially beyond fair share. Unfortunately, time spent on non-school-counseling-related tasks is time not spent working directly in the program with students, parents, teachers and administrators.

### **Closing the Gap**

To close the implementation gap, we must overcome tradition. We must reckon with change. We must focus on time-on-task.

**Overcome tradition:** Tradition is a strong force to overcome, and yet, schools must overcome it to fully implement comprehensive school counseling programs. In overcoming tradition in school counseling, the goal is not to discard the good work that has been done and is being done by school counselors operating in a position-services mode. The goal is to embed this approach within the organizational framework of K-12 comprehensive school counseling programs to enable all school counselors to think and plan collectively so they can work more effectively in their buildings. By embedding the position approach and services model within comprehensive programs, school counselors can be converted from persons with lists of duties to persons who have total comprehensive school counseling programs to develop and implement, which provide services to all students and their parents systematically and sequentially K-12. When this is done, school counselors will no longer be seen as office people; they will be seen as program people.

**Reckon with change:** Change is inevitable. Too often schools and districts treat implementing comprehensive school counseling programs as a one-time event. They generate enthusiasm about implementing the programs, hold events to launch the programs, but then, the challenge of everyday events smothers any follow-through implementation procedures. We are good at holding “first annuals” but often find it difficult to complete the full implementation process. Make no mistake, program implementation is a process not an event. Districts must build sufficient time and resources into the implementation process if they plan to attain full implementation.

Districts must also take into account the magnitude of the change process, shifting from the traditional position approach and services model to a comprehensive program approach. Some individuals view change as simply an extension of what exists. Others see change as a substantial shift from what exists. The problem occurs when one group sees a change as simply an extension of the past and consistent with current values, whereas another group sees the same change as a substantial break from the past that conflicts with current values. It is important to find out how the individuals involved in change view it. Is the change needed to fully implement comprehensive school counseling programs seen as an extension of what is by school counselors but a substantial change or break from the past by administrators? Or vice versa? It makes a difference and will affect whether the implementation process occurs smoothly, unevenly or not at all.

**Focus on time-on-task:** Writing down the program is the first step in implementing it. Having a written program doesn't mean the program is automatically implemented, but you can't implement something that isn't there. A key to implementing the written program is calendaring. Calendaring requires you to lay out planned program activities and services over the four component areas – guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services and system support – throughout the course of the year. Pay careful attention to time-on-task in this process so at least 80 percent of school counselor time is spent in direct services to students and parents (guidance curriculum, individual student planning and responsive services) and 20 percent or less is spent in indirect services (system support). The time given to various program components varies by grade level, is reviewed periodically and modified according to student and building needs.

Full implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs requires school counselors to spend 100 percent of their time providing activities and services to all students and their parents as well as to

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### **Implementation Gap** **Continued from Page 17**

teachers and administrators. One hundred percent school counselor time-on-task means administration must reassign the non-school-counseling-related tasks that many school counselors currently perform. Remember these inappropriate tasks are ones that are above and beyond the fair-share tasks all school counselors carry out as members of a school district's faculty.

Districts and schools can use two strategies to respond to inappropriate tasks: displacing inappropriate activities and streamlining school counselor involvement in these tasks. Both strategies involve shifting school counselor time to the important tasks of the district's comprehensive school counseling program. As this occurs, it is important for all to remember that school counselors are not trying to get out of something; they are trying to spend full time working in the program with students, parents and teachers.

### **Closing the Gap Benefits**

Today, perhaps more than at any time in our history, schools are facing immense problems in responding to the needs and concerns of students in a changing and diverse world. Community, state and national governments are expressing concern about a lack of academic achievement; incidents of fighting, bullying, discrimination and vandalism; absenteeism; dropout rates; and the lack of motivation to learn. All of this is occurring in a world that is presenting many challenges to our children and young people. A rapidly changing work world and labor force; violence in homes, schools and communities; divorce; teenage suicide; substance abuse; and sexual experimentation are just a few examples of these challenges. They are real, and they are having substantial impact on our children's academic, career and personal/social development.

When comprehensive school counseling programs are fully implemented, school counselors can make substantial contributions, helping all students deal positively with these concerns and challenges. A fully implemented program provides school counselors with a consistent K-12 organizational framework that allows them to focus their professional time and expertise full time. A fully implemented program also organizes and sequences the activities and services of the program to provide all students with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in school. In addition, a fully implemented program features school counselors who work in collaboration with parents, teachers, administrators and other professional personnel. At the same time, a fully implemented program requires that school counselors work closely with specific groups of students who need special assistance. Finally, a fully implemented program is

an accountable program. Program, personnel and results evaluation are expected activities in a fully implemented program providing data to inform program redesign and enhancement.

Closing the implementation gap is not an end in itself. Closing the gap is a means to an end. The end is a fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program that provides school counselors and other personnel who work in the program with the time-on-task, content, structure, resources and data to assist all students to connect firmly and positively to school.

*Norman C. Gysbers, Ph.D., is a professor with distinction in the Department of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology, University of Missouri-Columbia. He can be reached at [gysbersn@missouri.edu](mailto:gysbersn@missouri.edu).*

# Editor's Note



*Anne Sourbeer Morris, Editor*

We are delighted with the increasing participation of counselor educators, interns, students, and practicing school counselors in contributing to **The Pennsylvania Counselor**, with two such submissions included in this issue:

- **An Investigation of Student Participation in a Graduation Project, Achievement Goals, and Career Exploration Endeavors** by Melissa Ostrowski, Penn Manor School District and Dr. Sandra Deemer, Millersville University of Pennsylvania; and
- **An intern, Help or Hindrance: Important Questions for Site Supervisors to Consider**, by Kayla Snyder, Graduate Assistant Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Kimberly Desmond, Assistant Professor of Counseling, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

To this end, we have added a new feature **Informing the Profession**, that we hope you will both enjoy and contribute to. We encourage additional scholarly submissions between 350 and 600 words with references. We request that work include peer-reviewed references from within the past five-years, as knowledge is expanding and changing rapidly. We value the addition of research-based knowledge to our publication. Thank you for your consideration.

# Supporting Students to Success! A Student Services Symposium

**When:** Tuesday, May 19th, 2009

**Where:** Marriott Lancaster at Penn Square, Lancaster, PA

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- unconditional support

The keynote speaker (invited) is Pedro Noguera, Ph.D., Executive Director and Professor, Metropolitan Center for Urban Education of the Steinhardt Schools of Culture, Education and Human Development at New York University in New York, NY. Dr. Noguera, a prolific writer and champion for issues relating to closing the achievement gap and ensuring equity and excellence for all students, will provide "New Directions for American Education" which will highlight new approaches to educating children and managing schools and districts to bring about the necessary educational outcomes that our nation so desperately needs.

## Agenda Highlights:

- Systemic alignment of all services, supports and academic strategies
- Approaches to infuse resiliency into schools' work with students
- Chapter 12 Students and Student Services requirements and strategic plan
- Success of targeted grant funding for implementation of evidence-based strategies to support student success
- Promotion of community schools in Pennsylvania
- Latest research on effective program models that create a high-quality student learning experience
- Effective use of school and community resources to remove barriers to learning

## Who Should Attend?

This symposium will provide valuable information for educators, pupil services personnel, elementary and secondary administrators, guidance counselors and other professionals.

## Registration and Lodging Information

- There is no fee to attend this event, but preregistration is required.
- To register, please visit the Center's website: [www.center-school.org](http://www.center-school.org), and click on professional development.
- The registration deadline is Friday, May 1, 2009, or until maximum capacity is reached.
- Breakfast and lunch will be provided.
- Participants are responsible for their own lodging. To reserve your room, please contact the Marriott Lancaster no later than Thursday, April 23, 2009 and mention "Student Services Symposium" to receive the conference rate of \$95.

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# *The* Pennsylvania COUNSELOR

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