

COUNSELOR CONNECTIONS

May/June 2016 • NYC Department of Education — Office of Guidance and School Counseling

OGSC Pride

By [Jaye Murray](#), LSCW

Executive Director,

Office of Guidance and School Counseling

As summer approaches, and our final Counselor Connections issue of the school year is released, I am proud about the work done by this office and the work that all of you have done throughout the year.

Professional Development

Over the course of this school year, the Office of Guidance and School Counseling (OGSC) provided a vast array of professional development opportunities. OGSC facilitated 15 meetings for the Field Support Center School Counseling Managers and Student Services Teams, and we provided over 60 trainings directly to school counselors, school social workers, and SAPIS. Workshop topics have included school counseling frameworks, professional portfolios, specialized trainings for new DOE counselors, LGBTQ pride, gender inclusive schools, unaccompanied minors, supporting children of incarcerated parents, domestic violence, restorative circles, and career development. We have updated our portal to provide you with more resources and supports while enhancing communication between our office and you in the field.

OGSC Highlights

The efforts and accomplishments of 26 school counselors were celebrated at the Thirtieth Annual School Guidance Counselor Recognition Ceremony on May 25, 2016. There were 50 additional SAPIS workers put into schools this year. In conjunction with the Office



Lois Herrera, Chief Executive Officer, Office of Safety and Youth Development; Jaye Murray, Executive Director, Office of Guidance and School Counseling; Elizabeth Rose, Deputy Chancellor, Division of Operations; and Chancellor Carmen Fariña attend the citywide school social workers conference on April 8.

of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD) attendance team, OGSC was instrumental in supporting school social workers placed in schools with high chronic absenteeism rates. This year, our office continued our work in advocating for and developing programs and supports for LGBTQ students including the addition of an LGBTQ community coordinator to our OGSC team.

New Developments for the 2016-17 School Year

We have been in the planning stages of next year's Equity and Excellence initiative, Single Shepherd, which will place over 100 school counselors and social workers in grade 6-12 schools in districts 7 and 23. Another initiative we are excited about will place social workers in schools with the highest number of students in temporary housing to provide counseling to students, support to families, and serve as liaisons to City shelters on behalf of the schools and families they will serve.



Chirlane McCray, the First Lady of New York City, thanks our school social workers at the citywide conference on April 8.

For Our School Social Workers

This year was the first time two professional developments were offered specifically for social workers. On April 8, 2016, close to 400 school social workers were in attendance at *“Collaboration and Inspiration: Social Workers Leaders, Advocates, and Brokers for Change.”* With the support of representatives from the National Association of Social Workers, the New York State School Social Work Association, Columbia University, and Fordham University, participants felt a charge of professional collegiality that many said was unprecedented. Along with the social workers mentioned and full OGSC team, we were joined by Chancellor Fariña, Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Rose, Chief Executive Officer Lois Herrera of OSYD, and First Lady Chirlane McCray. Participants raved that they had never before felt so acknowledged and appreciated for the work that they

do. “We appreciate you,” was declared by our honored guest speakers repeatedly while participants basked in the acknowledgement of their work.

PRIDE

To say that I am proud of the productivity, professionalism and work ethic of the OGSC team is an understatement. Pride comes in many forms and for many reasons. As June is celebrated as “Pride” month, we think of LGBTQ pride while encouraging the openness of and support for LGBTQ students, families, and staff members. We encourage our LGBTQ counselors and social workers to talk to us about their experiences and to let us know how we can support you in being positive role models for our students.

In terms of pride, let us be proud of the NYC DOE whose central leadership lifts up our counseling professions recognizing our work as integral to the social-emotional and academic success of all of our students. Those meetings, conversations, and development of initiatives and strategies involving the work of school counselors, SAPIS, and social workers are the makings of some of the positive DOE stories that do not make it to the newspapers. It is up to us to be loud and proud of our school district, of our schools, of our administration, and of the work that you all do. We have been very busy and the upcoming year promises even more for us to do as the OGSC office expands, the initiatives continue, and the work of all of you continues to thrive.

WE’VE MOVED!

The **GUIDANCE PORTAL** has moved to the menu under the **NYC DOE Office of Guidance and School Counseling** page. The **Guidance Portal** has also been renamed the **Counseling Support Portal**.

For comprehensive school counseling resources, please visit the **Counseling Support Portal** at its new location:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/StudentSupport/GuidanceandCounseling/Guidance/default.htm>

Please add the link to your favorites.



Message from the Editor

Greetings School Counselors, Social Workers, and SAPIS Counselors:

I am thrilled to have this opportunity to write to you on a more personal level. As the editor of [Counselor Connections](#), I hope that our newsletter helps you to feel more connected to New York City's counseling community. You will always have a seat at the table in Tweed's rotunda, as you are a part of the dialogue here. Being attuned is indeed a two-way street.

The Office of Guidance and School Counseling (OGSC) is committed to providing you with the highest levels of professional support, and with each newsletter article we write, we always look to provide specific, actionable recommendations. Each issue offers at least one hands-on counseling activity for your group counseling sessions and classroom guidance lessons, and our "Success Stories" columns encourage you to share your accomplishments directly with your colleagues across the city. This month's newsletter theme is "LGBTQ Pride," as EVERY ONE of our students deserves a school environment that enables them to thrive.

This year in *Counselor Connections*, we have focused on a number of critical areas. We highlighted the new Chancellor's Regulation A-411 regarding behavioral crisis de-escalation and related counseling strategies. Since the fall, many of you have had the opportunity to attend Therapeutic Crisis Intervention in Schools (TCIS) trainings on de-escalation techniques. The November/December 2015 issue outlined the practice of the guidance lesson and suggested a number of free guidance curriculums. In another issue, we offered a plethora of youth development strategies to enhance your school's culture and climate. We also helped to demystify using data systemically with several practical tips.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my administration for their vision in developing student support services, and in creating channels for innovation: Jaye Murray, Executive Director, Office of Guidance and School Counseling; Chief Executive Officer Lois Herrera, Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD); and

Elizabeth Rose, our Deputy Chancellor of Operations. I am very proud to be a part of the OSYD family; oddly enough, I felt like I was working for OSYD for many years before I joined the team at central DOE. We are also very grateful to have Chancellor Carmen Fariña's unwavering commitment, as she launched the Office of Guidance and School Counseling within the first 100 days of her tenure.

Of course, *Counselor Connections* is always a labor of love for me. We are committed to providing you with comprehensive resources for school-based youth development programs, as the on-going support you provide to our students and families is crucial for many of our students' success in school and beyond. We will all work collaboratively to move the City's student support services professions (school counseling, social work, SAPIS) to their fullest potential. On this note, we look forward to highlighting the DOE's [Single Shepherd](#) initiative in the upcoming school year. Of course, all of our collective efforts are ultimately focused on student achievement, which is at the heart of the DOE's Framework for Great Schools. We look forward to our celebration in June to recognize those of you who have shared your success stories in our newsletter this school year.

As we attend professional development meetings with counselors across the City, we are delighted to receive positive feedback while learning more about the ways you have applied the suggestions and tips given in these newsletters. Please feel free to contact me at mbattis@schools.nyc.gov regarding your thoughts, and we hope you each have an exciting and restful summer vacation. We look forward to collaborating with you and your Field Support Center School Counseling Managers next year.

Michael Battista
Senior Administrator for
Special Projects, Office of
Guidance and School
Counseling



PRIDE!

Celebrating LGBTQ Students, Families, and Staff

By [Jared Fox](#)

LGBTQ Community Liaison,
Office of Guidance and School Counseling

"Elijah is a boy. He isn't sort of a boy or kind of a boy. He isn't a girl who wants to be a boy. He's a boy." Daniel stated. Daniel was speaking about his best friend Elijah, a 17-year-old transgender male who will be graduating this spring and hopes to study politics and music in the fall. The two students were just a couple of hundreds gathered in the cafeteria of the Tito Puente Educational Complex during a lunch break of the [Manhattan LGBTQ Youth Summit](#). The summit, the fourth in a series, was hosted by New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito, several Council Members, and the Hetrick-Martin Institute.

During the day I watched young people embrace [ball culture](#) in the gymnasium, attend workshops like [The T on PrEP](#), and learn from the exhibitors gathered in the hallways. They were joined by Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and New York City Council members, Rosie Mendez and Carlos Menchaca. The theme of the day was, "Breaking Barriers," and throughout the day, young people scrawled all of the ways that they break barriers.

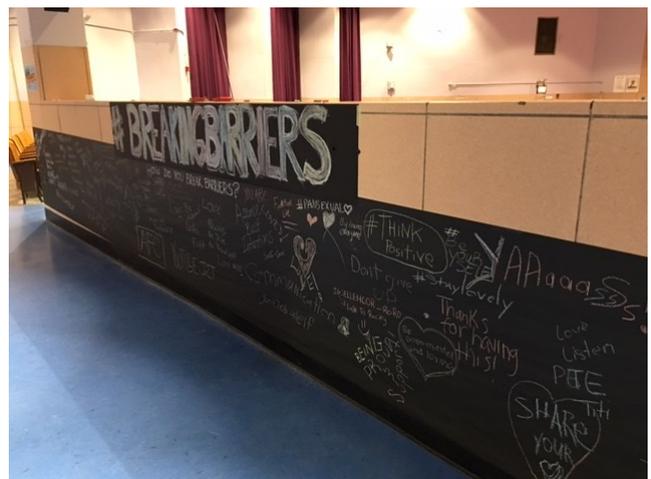
While it was great to see that Daniel and Elijah have formed an incredible friendship, I was troubled reading through students' evaluations about the event after it was over. One question asked on the evaluation was, "Do you have a trusted adult in your life?" Evaluation after evaluation had been dropped off without a single

"yes" circled or checked by students. Those few students that actually circled "yes" were then asked how many adults they could trust, and the responses were commonly "1" or "2."

Now imagine this: *one of those trusted adults could be you.*

This newsletter can help each of you take the first steps towards becoming a trusted adult in a young LGBTQ persons life. But educating yourselves about LGBTQ students does not stop here. I encourage all of you to join the new [NYC Schools Pride Facebook group](#). The group is a place for employees to share ideas of how they support LGBTQ students, families, and other staff members across the five boroughs.

Lastly, June is a celebratory month for the LGBTQ community. Read more about LGBTQ history in NYC [here](#), and join the DOE as we celebrate our past and look forward to the future in the Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan pride parades. Interested in joining us? Check out <http://schools.nyc.gov/pride>.



ATTN: SAPIS COUNSELORS

On Tuesday, February 9, 2016, students from **Long Island City High School (LICHS, 30Q450)**, under the leadership of Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialist (SAPIS) Counselor Raveenga Perera, participated in Legislative Day in Albany. The visit to Albany was part of LICHS students' participation in a *NYC Smoke Free Leadership* group, facilitated by Ms. Perera. In group, students discussed strategies to protect the health of New Yorkers through tobacco control policies, advocacy, and education.

On Legislative Day, LICHS students shared their thoughts and ideas with many legislators in Albany. They were able to speak about the importance of bringing awareness regarding the dangers of tobacco to the public and identified specific groups at risk of tobacco use. They also participated in a workshop about advocacy campaigns, and met with other student leaders from the citywide *NYC Smoke Free* campaign. Overall, the students had a great time touring Albany's Legislative and Capital buildings and meeting with legislators during this important event.



Long Island High School (30Q450) SAPIS Raveenga Perera, student Josiah Woods, Senator Leroy Comrie, and student Que'-Sean Alford celebrate Legislative Day in Albany, and highlight the NYC Smoke Free Campaign.

Respect for All LGBTQ Poster



The *new!* [Respect for All LGBTQ poster](#) is now available at the [Principals' Portal](#) [Respect for All page](#).

“ Success is not final, failure is not final: it is the courage to continue that counts. ”

-Winston S. Churchill

Universal Mental Health Initiatives

By [Diana Hayes](#)

Senior Administrator for Elementary Schools,
Office of Guidance and School Counseling

THRIVENYC: A Mental Health Roadmap for All

Most LGBTQ youth are happy and thrive during their adolescent years. Going to a school that creates a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and having caring and accepting parents is especially important. Negative attitudes toward LGBTQ youth put them at an increased risk to encounter violence, compared with other students. Violence can include behaviors such as bullying, teasing, harassment, physical assault, and suicide-related behaviors. Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) can help to ensure that your school provides LGBTQ students with a supportive school environment.

Providing mental health supports to our students is a high priority for the NYC Department of Education. Under ThriveNYC, the DOE is introducing three new mental health training efforts to support teachers and school staff members as they work to meet the needs of our students:

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)

This training is recommended for middle and high school personnel working with students ages 12 -18 who:

- ▶ Interact regularly with students
- ▶ Want a more in-depth overview of mental health problems and typical versus atypical adolescent behavior
- ▶ Could benefit from being certified as a Mental Health First Aider

Making Education Partners (MEP)

This training is recommended for elementary, middle and high school personnel who:

- ▶ Want real-life scenarios for youth suicide prevention methods
- ▶ Want an overview of specific populations that have elevated risk (e.g., LGBTQ students, bullying/bullied students)
- ▶ Want a school gatekeeper training on Suicide Prevention in schools

Kognito At-Risk Training

This online training for all staff across all schools uses interactive role play to education teachers on recognizing early signs and symptoms of psychological distress and how to connect students to necessary resources.

The Department of Education is currently rolling out each of these trainings. We encourage all schools to participate in these trainings to make sure that our kids have essential social-emotional supports throughout their years as DOE students.

“For the first time, as a city, we are fighting to shatter that stigma and deal with the public health crisis of mental health.”

- Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York

“Breaking the Silos” - What Middle School Counselors Can Do

By [Zuri Jackson-Woods](#)

Senior Administrator for Middle Schools,
Office of Guidance and School Counseling

Our families today are increasingly diverse. As such, our youngsters may be raised by grandparents, single parents, stepparents, aunts, uncles or foster parents. Their parents may be married or unmarried; they may be heterosexual or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ).

With that said, regardless of their differences, the common denominator is that all of our youngsters matter and deserve safe, secure, and caring environments so that they can thrive. But how can we start thinking a bit differently about what’s going on with our LGBTQ youngsters?

Perhaps we can start by “[breaking the silos](#)” that often exist between school counselors and other educators who serve our youngsters. We must be mindful that counselors cannot do it alone as, “it takes the whole village,” and our youngsters’ trajectories are depending on us. Therefore it is incumbent on us to leverage our capacity by collaborating with administrators, teachers, families, and community organizations to identify student needs and deliver services that make a positive impact on all of our youngsters social-emotional, academic, and post-secondary learning experiences. This partnership gives all of our youngsters’ opportunities for success. The question is, what resources and training can counselors

provide to contribute to making the landscape more equitable and fair?

What can we do right now to ‘Break the Silos?’

- ▶ Become a member of the School Leadership Team.
- ▶ Think collaboratively, not supplementary.
- ▶ Be a consultant to teachers as you are a developmental and behavioral expert who can provide strategies to implement.
- ▶ Empower your school community to understand the role of the school counselor.
- ▶ Use data to inform and guide collaboration.
- ▶ Share expertise and knowledge rather than hoard or silo it away.
- ▶ Keep everyone on the same page by keeping everyone in the loop as new developments arise. *The proverbial “same page” becomes a real thing that people welcome.*
- ▶ Use a centralized “bulletin board,” and update it at least once a week to highlight or give a “shout out” to people who did something fabulous to support our youngsters.
- ▶ Develop a social committee to create fun and social events for school staff to participate in every month. This collaboration will get teachers, paraprofessionals, school safety, etc. hanging out and talking with one another. You never know what great ideas can come out of eating ice cream.

“We have an obligation to act in solidarity in the direction of collective liberation!”

What targeted supports and resources can school counselors offer to our LGBTQ youngsters?

- ▶ Provide training for all staff and families on our LGBTQ population. Prezi offers a plethora of prepared slideshows (e.g., [Transgender Identity and Lives Prezi](#)).
- ▶ Ensure there is a “safe person” that our LGBTQ students can refer to for accurate information and resources.
- ▶ Create a [diversity club](#). This effort would prevent singling out our LGBTQ youngsters and could draw more members as a way to promote tolerance and acceptance to a broader group.
- ▶ Have [books](#) or other materials in your office, in clear view, discussing issues related to LGBTQ individuals.
- ▶ Provide, support, and encourage environments where all students and staff feel safe and accepted: Being available to LGBTQ faculty can help model and create a more tolerant and safe learning environment for both faculty and students.
- ▶ Provide push-in guidance lessons specifically addressing LGBTQ issues.
- ▶ Provide assemblies and push-in guidance lessons on topics such as identity, relationships, values clarification,

communication, character education, gender roles, career exploration, and bullying prevention.

We must ask ourselves, “What can we do differently?” Then the work begins of building relationships and partnering in our areas of specialty. Only then will we authentically see all of our youngsters and their families as fully- realized human beings, and respectively discuss our youngsters in more humanizing manners. Accordingly, we have an obligation to do more than to just connect with our youngsters. We have an obligation to act in solidarity in the direction of collective liberation!

RESOURCES:

- ◆ Cohen, S.B., (2013). *Breaking Down Silos in a School District: Findings form an Ed. L.D. Project in Montgomery County*. Harvard Graduate School of Education.



SPREAD THE POSITIVITY

By scanning this QR Code, you can receive [positive affirmations](#) from the Office of Guidance and School

Counseling. Share the QR code with your students to help inspire them with positive messages!



Providing Education and Support to Families of LGBTQ Youth

By [Margarita Suero-Durán](#), Ed. D.
Senior Administrator for High Schools,
Office of Guidance and School Counseling

SAMHSA’s practitioner guide, [Helping Families to Support their LGBT Children](#), highlights the key role student support personnel can have in “helping families understand that there is a powerful relationship between their words, actions, and behaviors and their LGBTQ child’s risk and well-being.” (SAMHSA, p. 8). Strength-based approaches to working with families include:

- ▶ Meeting families “where they are” and viewing each family as an ally. Some families might have been accepting even before their child’s “coming out”, some may quickly learn ways to be supportive, and others may need individual supports or counseling to adjust. All families can benefit from education and awareness.
- ▶ Providing opportunities to encourage parents and caregivers to tell their story in a safe and non-judgmental environment. This critical step helps to build a strong school-family alliance.
- ▶ Helping families develop respectful language to facilitate open conversations with their children about sexual orientation and gender identity.
- ▶ Educating families on the risks of rejecting behaviors, including “trying to discourage or change their child’s sexual orientation.” Research has found that youth who feel highly rejected have experienced increased suicide attempts, higher levels of depression, are 3 times more likely to use illegal drugs, and are

as likely to be at high risk for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (Supportive Families, Healthy Children).

- ▶ Educating families on the profound impact that supportive and accepting family behaviors have on their child’s well-being. Proactive family behaviors include supporting their child’s gender expression and welcoming their child’s LGBTQ friends.

A wealth of resources to help educate and connect families with community support, include:

- ▶ [Supportive Families, Healthy Children](#), a downloadable educational brochure of The Family Acceptance Project. Families may learn, for instance, that when young people feel their family members reject their gay or transgender identity, this may lead them to feel that *who* they are as a whole person is being rejected.
- ▶ The [Unlearning Homophobia series](#), a compilation of three groundbreaking films tackling discrimination’s effect on American families and communities.
- ▶ [PFLAG NYC](#) provides resources to help family members better understand and strengthen relationships with LGBTQ loved ones. PFLAG provides support, advice and unconditional love to the LGBTQ community.

We encourage you to email Margarita Suero-Durán at msuerod@schools.nyc.gov to share in what ways you have supported LGBTQ students and families through their journey of identity acceptance and pride.



For questions or comments, please email: guidance@schools.nyc.gov.

Resources for LGBTQ Students



[Respect for All \(RFA\) web site](#) provides resources for school RFA anti-bullying programs, which include student and faculty trainings. Each school designates a Respect for All liaison who students can talk to. The RFA liaison should be listed on the [Respect for All posters](#), which are displayed throughout the school.

- **new!** The [Respect for All LGBTQ poster](#) is now available at the [Principals' Portal Respect for All page](#).



The [Ackerman Institute for the Family - Gender & Family Project \(GFP\)](#) empowers youth, families and communities by providing gender affirmative services, training and research. GFP promotes gender inclusivity as a form of social justice in all the systems involved in the life of the family.



The [Ali Forney Center \(AFC\) Community-based Outreach program](#) conducts outreach through presentations and workshops in schools, community centers, religious organizations, and other NYC entities engaged with LGBTQ youth.



[CAMBA's Project Accept LGBT Youth Project Aly](#) uses stories of acceptance from parents/families of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ) youth in Brooklyn to change underlying causes of HIV infection among this highly at-risk group.



[The Center \(The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center\)](#) fosters a welcoming environment where everyone is celebrated for who they are. The center offers the LGBTQ communities of NYC health and wellness programs; arts, entertainment and cultural events; recovery, wellness, parenthood and family support services.



[GLSEN \(Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network\)](#) is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students.

- Resources include [Student Action](#) and [Educator Guides](#).



[Harvey Milk High School \(HMHS\)](#) is a small, public, transfer school. HMHS is currently seeking applicants to join its diverse school community. Applicants must meet one of the following criteria: 16 years old with 11-13 credits and 1-2 Regents; 17 years old with 16-19 credits and 3 or more Regents; or 18 years old with 22-25 credits and 3 or more Regents. An application [is available here](#).



[Hetrick-Martin Institute](#) - provides a safe and supportive environment for LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13 and 24 and their families. Hetrick-Martin's staff promotes excellence in the delivery of youth services and uses its expertise to create innovative programs that other organizations may use as models.



[PFLAG](#) unites people who are LGBTQ with families, friends, and allies.

- [The PFLAG NYC Safe Schools Program](#) works with works with teachers, principals, counselors and students to ensure that LGBTQ youth are safe and successful in school.



[The Trevor Project](#) is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people, ages 13-24.

- [Trevor Lifeline \(866-488-7386\)](#) offers trained volunteer counselors ready to listen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- The Trevor Project also provides information and training programs to help educators learn about LGBTQ youth including: [Trevor Ally Trainings](#), [Trevor CARE trainings](#), [adult trainings](#), and [webinars](#).

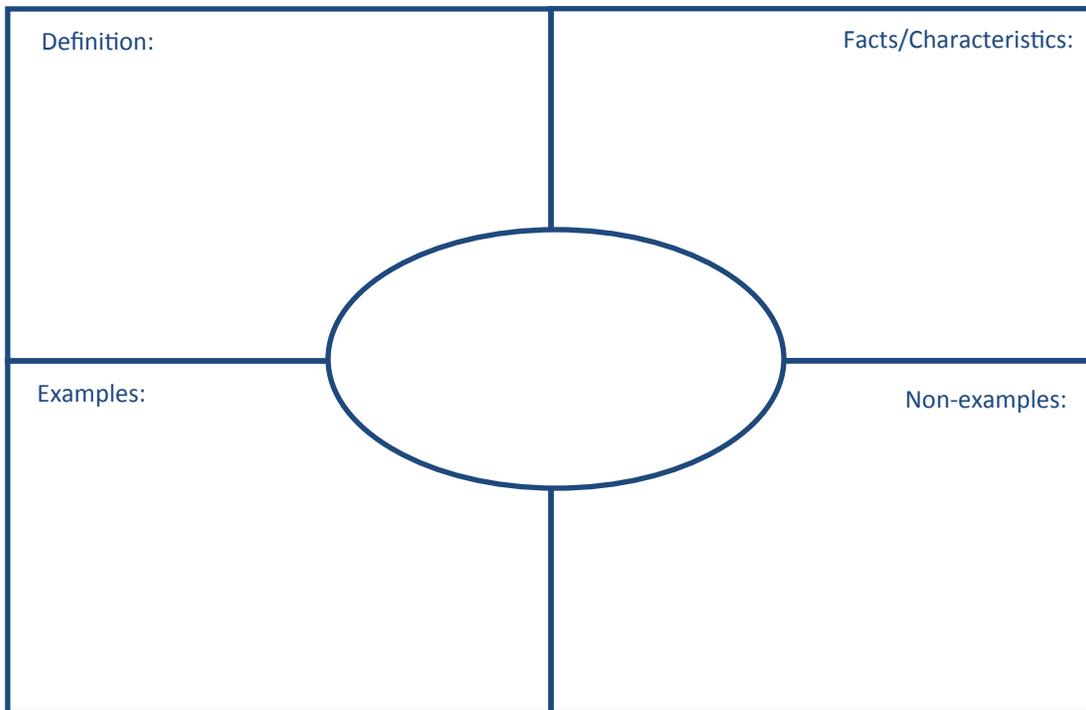
Student Name: _____

Student Activity - Appreciating the Uniqueness of Self and Others

Please write three words which describe you. These words can be either personal characteristics, qualities, or concepts you identify with (e.g., cultural identity).

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

Now choose one of these words and write it at the center of the following Frayer Model. Please complete each category of the following Frayer Model.



Discussion Questions:

1. How do you appreciate others who may be different than you? How would you be friends with (or at least get along with) someone who is different than you?
2. Can you think of a positive example from this group or from your class?
3. How can appreciating the uniqueness of self and others help you in your school performance?
4. How can appreciating the uniqueness of self and others help you in the future including college and career?

This activity meets [American School Counselor Association \(ASCA\) National Standards for Students:](#)

- ◆ **PS:A2 Acquire Interpersonal Skills** (PS:A2.3 Recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual differences)

This activity also meets [ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success:](#)

- ◆ **Category 2: Behavior Standards** (Social Skills: 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with other students & 3. Create relationships with adults that support success.)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC POLICY AND SYSTEMS

In New York City, academic policies set by the City and State govern the way schools structure academic programs in grades K–12, promote students to the next grade level, and graduate students who are prepared for college and careers. The DOE’s academic policy [Intranet page](#) contains helpful resources that school counselors can use for students’ academic planning. For all questions about this content, please contact your [Academic Policy & Systems lead](#). If your school has created exemplary practices around certifying graduates, please let your [lead](#) know so we can learn more about your work!

Graduation Certification

Before seniors are discharged in ATS, receive a diploma, and walk in their graduation ceremonies, individual high schools must verify that students have met all the City and State requirements for earning a diploma. Through the certification process, schools review their transcripts, verify courses and assessments, and attest that requirements are met. Certification is one of the most serious and important academic procedures high schools complete.

It’s essential that every high school establish a protocol respecting the significance and legality of the graduation certification process. We highly recommended that schools use the [Senior Certification Guide](#) to develop a sound process for discharging graduates. It contains timelines and templates. Schools can also use this to create their own process. While the exact format may differ from school to school due to differences in student population size and availability and expertise of school staff, schools should:

- ▶ Identify the specific staff members involved and their discrete responsibilities;
- ▶ Designate a quiet, secure place where personnel can work on certification tasks uninterrupted;
- ▶ Establish a system for guidance counselors to review and sign off on each transcript, as well as track transcript determinations;
- ▶ Create a plan for communicating with students who have *not* met graduation requirements;
- ▶ Have a clear understanding of which student records should be kept, and which should be destroyed;

- ▶ Establish checks, reviews, and signoff for final data entry into ATS.

There are several tools that schools can consult during the certification process. These are supplemental, and in no way should stand in place of a comprehensive certification process:

1. The [HS Credit and Exam Distribution Screen](#);
2. The Progress to Graduation Tracker for your school (available on the Principals’ Portal under the ‘My Accountability Reports’ page);
3. The [diploma worksheet](#).

Test Your Understanding:

1. Can students who are just one exam or credit away from graduation still participate in graduation ceremonies?
2. Should all student records be maintained once a student graduates?
3. Who signs off on override codes entered into ATS?
4. Who is ultimately responsible for certifying students have met graduation requirements?
5. What if a student’s diploma is lost or stolen?

Answers: **[1.]** *No – only students who have met all requirements may participate in graduation ceremonies.* **[2.]** *No – some documents need to be maintained, while others should be destroyed. Academic records such as a counselor’s worksheet that documents student progress to graduation should be kept; disciplinary records should be shredded.* **[3.]** *Principals **must** sign off on all override codes entered into ATS for graduating students. This policy was effective as of January 2016.* **[4.]** *Diplomas may only be issued **once**. Schools should have a system for ensuring that students sign a receipt of having received their diploma. Schools may also consider distributing a copy of the diploma during the ceremony, and issuing the actual diploma at a more secure time.*

Have questions about the graduation certification process? Please contact your [Academic Policy & Systems lead](#) or consult the [Senior Certification Guide](#) or [High School Academic Policy Guide](#).

UPDATES FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Dear Middle School Counselors:

Thank you for all your hard work in guiding your students through High School Admissions this year. With over 80,000 students participating, your support has been instrumental to student success. Because of your guidance, 93% of eighth-grade applicants received an offer from their Round 1 Applications.

May and June is a great time help seventh grade students think about their High School Applications. Here are some steps you can take to prepare these students and your school community:

- ▶ **Guide seventh grade students to begin exploring high school options.** *The 2017 New York City High School Directory* will be distributed to middle schools in June. Use the student activities in the directory to engage your students in the High School Admissions process. Guide students to explore the directory, and begin keeping track of programs that interest them.
- ▶ **Have seventh grade students talk to the experts: eighth grade students.** Facilitate conversations between eighth grade students and seventh grade students. Have the eighth grade students share how they researched schools for their applications, and any tips they have for preparing for the fall.
- ▶ **Encourage families to attend summer High School Admissions workshops.** These will take place in each borough during July. Details can be found on our [events page](#).
- ▶ **Plan for the fall.** Pick a date that you will invite families to your school to learn about High School Admissions. Identify a space in your school or office where you can post information and resources about applying to high school. Think about steps you can take to support your students in selecting schools for their applications.

As our team continues to prepare for this fall, we are eager to hear your ideas on how we can support your work. Please share your suggestions and insights with us by emailing HSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.

As always, we are grateful to have you as partners in ensuring students and families throughout the five boroughs make informed choices about their futures.

Best,

Amy Basile

Executive Director of High School Admissions
Office of Student Enrollment

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OFFICE OF EQUITY AND ACCESS

By [Doreen Kendall](#)

Program Director

DREAM - Specialized High Schools Institute

Office of Equity and Access

DREAM-Specialized High Schools Institute

Mission

The [DREAM-Specialized High Schools Institute](#) (SHSI) is tasked with providing high quality Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) preparation services to eligible students.

What distinguishes DREAM-SHSI from other programs is our ability to couple high quality test-prep with social-emotional supports. We have 20 sites strategically located within the 5 boroughs. At a minimum, each site has one school counselor, and counselors can work in various capacities. Counselors, for example, can serve as facilitators during monthly parent engagement sessions to help educate them about the Specialized High School (SHS) and the general high school admissions processes. Also, our counselors implement the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Curriculum during Saturday sessions, where students learn necessary skills to manage and cope with stress, pressures from home, school, and their peers. Students are provided with whole-group and individual school counseling sessions, as needed.

Counseling Highlights

Site 20, Mrs. Leticia Ojeda at M.S. 218 in the Bronx, organizes a SHS Open House and invites representatives from the 8 SHSs to participate in an effort to share information with families. Feedback from families has been well received. A parent of a Grade 7 student attending DREAM-SHSI at M.S. 218 commented, *"We didn't even know there was a SHS on the City College Campus. I'm a student at City College working on my social work degree, and I wouldn't even know this if Mrs. Ojeda hadn't brought them in to talk with us. I want my daughter to apply for this school."*

Looking ahead

Beginning in the summer 2016, we are looking ahead at implementing the DREAM-Folio for students to use in addition to their academic records when applying to high school. The "folio," developed in part with support from their counselors, will compile individual student college and career exploration artifacts that focus on each student's experiences, goals, hopes, and dreams.

Additional information on DREAM-SHSI is available ([here](#)). For questions, please contact SHSI@schools.nyc.gov.



Counselor Success Stories

DISTRICT 1 — 6, Manhattan

College Access Systems

Submitted by Heather LaValle, School Counseling Manager (9-12), Manhattan Borough Field Support Center; Laurie Bernstein, School Counselor; Allison Cohen, College Counselor

Eleanor Roosevelt High School (02M416) is marked by the interweaving of students' social-emotional development, academic planning, and college access needs through a comprehensive student support program developed by school counselor, Laurie Bernstein, and college counselor, Allison Cohen, with the consistent support of Principal Dimitri Saliani.

During the Summer Bridge program, each incoming student provides confidential feedback on a counselor “**intake form**” to facilitate timely counselor intervention. The student support team collaborates closely with all faculty to structure and deliver the Advisory program via developmentally-appropriate lesson plans. During a recent advisory session, for example, students used their smartphones to research the incidence of inclusive language, and led a whole group discussion focusing on the Inclusive [Language Campaign](#).

Student empowerment opportunities include the “ElRo Sibs’ – upper classmen peer leaders who lead lessons within Grade 9 and Grade 10 advisory classes. Advisory curricula have a heavy focus on the college application process, but do not overlook essential life skills topics such as decision-making around sexual consent, refusal skills for alcohol and drugs, and Respect For All. College access resources and activities include college visits, assemblies repeated in different languages, the [The College Office Information & Documents](#) available at the website, [College Signing Day](#), and a strategic college acceptance map.

In addition, college process information is regularly



Eleanor Roosevelt High School (02M416) proudly displays its College Acceptance Map.

shared with students and parents/guardians via email blasts which are balanced with two one-on-one college meetings for every student. A college office blog also provides online information for the greater community at large and is a resource available at any time, even if school is not in session.

An outline of the school's college activities is available [here](#). Can these best practices be replicated? Yes, but it requires you to win your school community's support, work collaboratively, and to identify your school's needs and building capacity within your student body. Reach out to Laurie Bernstein and Allison Cohen for any assistance.

DISTRICTS 7 — 12, Bronx

Impacting Senior Student Motivation

Submitted by Derrick Daniels, SAPIS Counselor

A member of the 2015- 2016 senior class at **Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology (10X438)** expressed that at the beginning of the year, he was looking forward to returning for his senior year in high school, but he always struggled academically

and socially. Therefore, he was not really excited. However, through conversations with Principal Fiorella Cabrejos and SAPIS Counselor Mr. Daniels, he learned about a new young men's group at the school. Immediately, he became very excited, and when he became president, he just felt very proud of the young men's group. "All us 20 guys are like brothers, we have done so much this year including meeting with the New York Knicks basketball players, a college trip to Manhattan College, and a pleasant meeting with Deputy Chancellor Laura Feijoo, who was very supportive of our group," he stated. Some of the student activities throughout the year included a Father and Son Dinner, Positive Self Identity and Personal Vision workshops, Life Skills, Social and Emotional Skills seminars, Work Ethic presentations, Lifelong Learning courses, and 1-to-1/Group Mentoring workshops. The student explained that these programs have helped him tremendously improve his grades and social life in school! He will be graduating this June, and appreciates having been part of something so special for the future generation of children at Fordham Leadership Academy.

DISTRICTS 13 — 23 & 32, BROOKLYN

Cluster Team Meetings

Submitted by Delgermaa Ganbaatar, School Counselor

In order to ensure a smooth transition to middle school, sixth graders at **Mark Twain Intermediate School 239 for the Gifted and Talented (21K239)** travel together in a block schedule from class to class, except for their talent and enrichment classes. To ensure personalization, all grades are organized in a cluster model. Teacher teams meet twice a week by cluster for common planning time meetings. Many cluster team meetings are used to plan interdisciplinary lessons. The School Counselor often attends cluster meetings in order to interface with the teacher teams for kid talk. In particular, the School Counselor has a high level of communication with the Cluster Coordinators or lead teachers. Cluster team members also keep each other informed through an

internal database system.

The cluster team meetings are also utilized for "cluster conferences," which provide a venue for student-led conferences with their parents and teachers. Students develop leadership skills by having the opportunity to speak with their team of teachers. At cluster conferences, parents also have the opportunity to meet with their child's entire team of teachers. The School Counselor will provide parents with the option to meet privately with her, and then offers feedback to the team. These approaches really ease the transition to middle school by providing students with a personalized learning experience.

Improved Behavior

Submitted by Kyriaki Kipriadis, School Counselor, and Debra Ross, Paraprofessional

A first grade student with an IEP at **PS 101 The Verrazano (21K101)** has made significant progress. The student had an IEP in place from his previous school, with placement in an Integrated Co-Teaching class along with an assigned 1:1 crisis paraprofessional and counseling. Most of last year was tumultuous for him. The school was unable to control his aggressive and impulsive behaviors. He would lay on the floor in the hallway, not respond to adults or students, and was not connecting with others. The schools had multiple meetings with his parents, as his parents did not understand why this was happening, and they could not find a way to get through to him.

The School Counselor met with the student for weekly mandated group counseling. Weekly sessions were focused on helping the student to develop his interpersonal skills with his peers. The student began to relax, and feel more comfortable playing with his group members. The counselor also used a number of children's books regarding social-emotional learning, specifically in regards to improving behavior.

The paraprofessional was always very firm, but caring and loving with the student. She always made sure he

was heard, but made it clear that inappropriate behavior was not acceptable. She used modeling, connected to him by sharing her own personal experiences, talked to him about what's right from wrong, and how sometimes you need to accept that the answer is "no." She would bring in snacks to share as an incentive and used a lot of positive reinforcements.

Towards the end of last year, after many behavior and incentive charts, the student began to show a lot of growth. He started to get along with others and showed an interest in creating relationships. His behavior was improving.

This year has been wonderful for him. He still has all of his services and his paraprofessional is by his side. He has not had any incidents so far. The student is doing well academically and is being more independent. He is polite, respectful, and kind to others, even those he has not been kind to in the past. He recently got blessed with a new baby brother, and speaks with pride about being the older brother who helps mom out. The school is very proud of the student's progress. The paraprofessional feels the student has taught her a lot about life and how to deal with situations. She is very grateful the student has impacted her and her relationships with others.

Innovations in Academic Planning

Submitted by Katia Duval, Maureen Hughes, and Barbara Mosconi, School Counselors

Leon M. Goldstein High School for the Sciences

(22K535) offers a number of innovative strategies to provide students with individualized attention in their academic planning, as well as to alleviate counselors' administrative paperwork. The school counselors coordinate a *Course Selection Fair* for students each term. Teachers of various course options host tables at the fair to explain the highlights of their course and academic expectations to students. Students complete a course selection request form at the conclusion of the fair.

Another innovative strategy for programming is that the school administration uses a merge of student data to manage students' appointments with their school counselor each academic semester.

Appointment notifications are sent to the students each morning. Student appointments are paced out in ten minute intervals. The guidance team rarely needs to complete an appointment slip. Having programming completed in this highly efficient manner empowers the guidance team to focus more on helping students to have optimal habits of success and additional social-emotional learning opportunities.

DISTRICTS 24 — 29, Queens

Calendar of Events for Respect for All Week

Submitted by Christine Fields, School Counseling Manager, Affinity Field Support Center; Vanessa Burdier, School Counselor; and Tafari Powis, School Counselor

In celebration of Respect for All Week, the school counselors at the **Young Women's Leadership School, Queens (28Q896)** collaborated with faculty and staff to promote respect for diversity and to engage students in meaningful lessons that focused on preventing bias-based harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.



The Young Women's Leadership School, Queens (28Q896) celebrates its themes for Respect for All Week.

Respect for All Week classroom activities at TYWLS focused on four themes in order to both educate and unite our young women: suicide awareness, teen dating violence, cyberbullying, and LGBTQ unity. A calendar of the school's RFA activities is available [here](#).

DISTRICT 31, Staten Island

An Exercise in Goal Setting in Elementary School - Creating a Career Roadmap for Success

Submitted by Dr. Nancy Ludwig, School Counselor

The School Counselor at **P.S. 58R, the Space Shuttle Columbia School (31R058)** implemented a school initiative to have all fifth graders graduate from elementary school with a completed, tentative, long-term career plan using goal-setting. In developing their *individual career plan*, students analyze how career is an expression of their hard work and preparation through each life stage of human development. The School Counselor designed the curriculum, and then coached her two guidance interns (from Brooklyn College and St. John's University) to turnkey a series of two guidance lessons with each fifth grade class.

In the first lesson, the fifth graders use online resources to explore a number of careers based on their personal interests and strengths. The students also research the steps towards potential careers, including DOE high school programs and postsecondary educational requirements. This lesson also examines how different careers can complement one's preferred lifestyle (e.g., stability, travel, income, family, etc.)

In the second lesson, students complete the actual

career plan, and "begin with the end in mind." Students plan backward from the long-term goal of a career and consider each step along the way (e.g., middle school, high school, college, and graduate studies). The goal setting activity developed by the School Counselor is available ([here](#)). During this lesson, students also consider how people usually tend to change career paths over the course of their lifetime, and the steps that a career change may entail.

The fifth grade teachers facilitate additional classroom discussions on students' "roadmap to success." In addition, an upcoming school *Career Night* will feature parents as guest speakers representing various fields. The school's career development initiative is ultimately designed to help students to begin middle school with a better understanding of the connection between their decisions in the here-and-now and their long-term trajectory.

Academy Learning Centers

Submitted by Linda Bunnicelli, Assistant Principal of Pupil Personnel Services

Students at **Susan E. Wagner High School (31R460)** receive a high degree of personalized attention, and find their niche in the greater school community through an innovative academy model. The Guidance Department coordinates the academy selection process for Grade 9 students, who are matched to their academy either through the high school admissions process or by survey prior to their first day of school at Wagner. Wagner's academies or "Learning Centers" focus on career areas including finance, language and

"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something--your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life."

- Steve Jobs

culture, the sciences, Air Force Junior ROTC, entrepreneurs, exploration, law and politics, theatrical arts, leadership, music, scholars, sports management, visual arts, and vocational preparatory. Learning Center electives are then scheduled based on results of the student surveys.

The Learning Centers offer students both academic planning/programming support and departmental tutoring opportunities. The Learning Centers also engage in monthly and annual competitions based on student achievement metrics including attendance, academic achievement, and school spirit. Guidance staff and teachers interact during Learning Center “Kid

Talk” sessions, which are designed to provide information and insight on specific children’s academic success. The Learning Centers also provide families with the opportunity to meet with their child’s team of teachers to discuss and plan their children’s academic progress. All Learning Centers have community service projects and activities embedded in their design and is a requirement for all four years of high school. Ultimately, students become active participants within the community and have forged many friendships and experienced many proud moments which they will remember and cherish for the rest of their lives.



SINGLE SHEPHERD

Coming to District 7 and District 23 middle schools and high schools for the upcoming school year! Learn more ([here](#)).

Share Your Counselor Success Story

Do you have a counselor success story that you would like to share with your colleagues?

Please email submissions to guidance@schools.nyc.gov.

A success story could feature:

- ▶ An individual student who made a significant turnaround or achieved his or her fullest potential thanks to the efforts of a school-based counselor
- ▶ A school-wide guidance intervention that was noteworthy in its effectiveness on impacting student attendance, behavior, and/or course marks (the A, B, Cs)
- ▶ An impactful group counseling activity or guidance lesson that students enjoyed

School-based counselors, social workers, and SAPIS counselors whose submissions are published will be invited to a special lunch at the end of the school year with the Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Safety and Youth Development, Lois Herrera, and with the Executive Director of the Office of Guidance and School Counseling, Jaye Murray.

Time to #Celebrate16!

Celebrate the 2016 school year by sharing photos and videos of your schools' end-of-year celebrations!

Use the tag, **#Celebrate16** on your social media posts for all of your end-of-year events, including proms, graduation ceremonies, class field trips, and professional awards for school personnel.

#CELEBRATE16

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