

# COUNSELOR CONNECTIONS

March/April 2016 • NYC Department of Education — Office of Guidance and School Counseling

## Using Data Systemically

By [Michael Battista](#)

Senior Administrator,

Office of Guidance and School Counseling

School counselors, school social workers, and SAPIS use data to plan new activities in order to have a greater school-wide impact. As such, a successful intervention for an individual student can be implemented on a larger schoolwide scale.

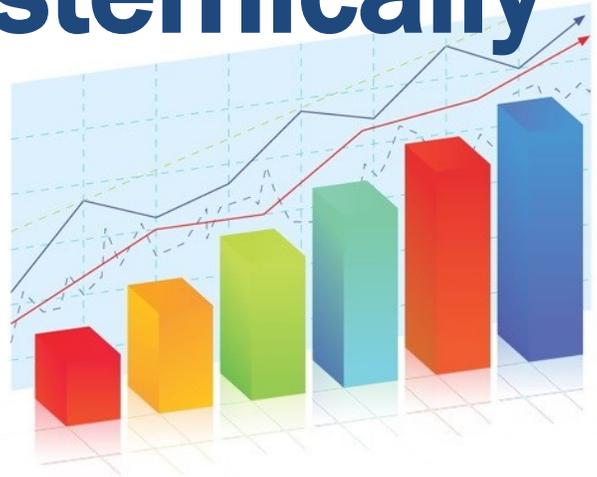
Utilizing a school counseling inquiry approach could enable you to incorporate the following schoolwide strategies and tactics:

### Make a Hypothesis; Identify the Target Group

- ▶ Analyze the [School Quality Report](#) to determine the needs of the school.
- ▶ Work with the school's administration to determine a target group (e.g., grade) or scope of your new activity in order to impact one of the A, B, Cs (attendance, behavior, and course marks) of student performance.
- ▶ Have the pupil personnel team or attendance committee analyze the needs of the target group to design a new initiative.
- ▶ Flag your target group (e.g., [the INTV student indicator in ATS](#)).

### Implement a New Counseling Activity

- ▶ Plan a new activity (the independent variable) to impact a student achievement metric (the dependent variable) in a positive way. New activities can include on-going thematic group counseling, daily check-ins, and/or mentoring.
- ▶ Select a data report for the A, B, Cs using a student data report from either a DOE or third-party database system.
  - **Attendance:** Suggested student attendance data



reports include ATS' [RRSA](#) or [RAMO](#) reports and the [Chronic Absenteeism data tool](#).

- **Behavior:** The [OORS](#) 3 Year Level 1-5 Incident & Suspension report can be used to track behavior.
- **Course Marks:** The [Student Failure Report](#) can be used to track student grades.
- ▶ High schools can use ATS' [RGCS](#) report to monitor [cohort performance](#).
- ▶ Log your interventions, including parent outreach efforts.

### Draw Conclusions

- ▶ Monitor progress throughout the year. Use the Microsoft Excel [VLOOKUP function](#) or a Microsoft Access [Query](#) to merge data from different data files as needed.
- ▶ If an intervention is successful, extend the activity to a larger group or to inform school policy.
- ▶ Celebrate the success of your initiative. Organize celebrations for your students and families. Share the impact of your work with your administration, parent association, school leadership team, and borough field support center. Please submit your story by email to [guidance@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:guidance@schools.nyc.gov).

# Message from the Executive Director: Professional-ism

## Greetings School Counselors, Social Workers and SAPIS Counselors:

Once, I was told that the *“ism”* in such states of mind and action as racism, heterosexism, ageism and sexism stands for the *“I, the Self, and the Me.”*

The *Merriam-Webster* dictionary defines, *“ism”* as the following:

1. a distinctive doctrine, cause, or theory
2. an oppressive and especially discriminatory attitude or belief

Within which of the two references of the above definition does professional-*“ism”* fall?

As it relates to the services we provide our students, our professionalism should fall exclusively in the category of a doctrine, cause, or theory, and never in discriminatory attitudes or belief. This is to hold true in states of mind and action toward both our students and our professional colleagues.

Let us break it down:

1. **Doctrine:** a belief or set of beliefs
2. **Cause:** a principle, aim, or movement that, because of a deep commitment, one is prepared to defend or advocate
3. **Theory:** a set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based

Each profession in our schools has many shared missions, values and skills. But the bottom line core of it all in any given moment is the question, *“is this good for kids?”*

According to the ASCA ethical standards for school counselors, professional school counselors *“support and protect students’ best interest against any infringement of their educational program.”* According to the NASW professional standards, *“school social workers shall demonstrate core values of service, social justice, dignity, and worth of the person,*

*importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.”*

Each of those standards excerpts speak to *“best interest”* and *“worth of the person.”* In order to achieve that, we must treat each other within our individual roles with optimum professionalism and respect. This holds true whether or not we are in the same room and whether or not we are working with the same student.

But professionalism professes a unity of doctrine, cause, and theory. In the case of our schools and their pupil personnel supports, the unified mission of all of its professional members is the execution of quality, compassionate, and consistent service to students and families. Professionalism is not about our individual professions when it comes to social-emotional supports, academic success, and post-secondary readiness for our students. It is about our collaborative efforts utilizing the unique trainings and skills of each profession with the shared goal of promoting students’ social-emotional and academic success.

The main consideration for any developing program, decision, intervention, or advocacy of any kind is whether or not it is the best action for our students. In all of our work and in every one of our decisions, the core foundation upon which our discussions should be founded is on our students’ well-being,

In the past month, I have had the opportunity to visit a few schools who are populated with many school counselors and social workers. Meeting together in one group has proven to be advantageous to all at the table, but especially to me, as it has deepened my understanding of the current struggles, challenges, and successes of the student support services being provided in schools. It has been refreshing to see the ways that some schools are able to populate their counseling services with a mix of professionals who work closely together to maximize positive outcomes

for their students. In a couple of cases, I have seen professionals vying for space, time, recognition, and control, which compromises services to students while creating a separation among the professions.

For the most part, I have had the opportunity to see stellar professionals; school counselors, social workers, and SAPIS lean upon one another's skills, trainings, experience, and commitment to young people in collaborative and respectful ways that benefit their entire school communities. In your own efforts to create or maintain effective collaborations among the professions, feel free to invite me to your schools to share what is working for you. I am interested in your strategies for success.

Professional-"ism" is not about the "I, the self, and the me." It is about the "we."

**Jaye Murray, LSCW**

Executive Director

Office of Guidance and School Counseling



Rosemarie Thompson, United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Guidance Counselors Chapter Leader; Jaye Murray, Executive Director, Office of Guidance and School Counseling; and Lois Herrera, Chief Executive Officer, Office of Safety and Youth Development, attend the [WeIntervene](#) Kickoff Event for National School Counseling Week on January 29, 2016.

**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.*

**"You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."**

**— Woodrow Wilson**

**STAY INFORMED!**

*For comprehensive school counseling resources, please visit the Guidance Portal at: [schools.nyc.gov/Teachers/guidance](https://schools.nyc.gov/Teachers/guidance)*



# ATTN: SAPIS COUNSELORS

By [Marion Thomas](#)

Senior Program Manager, Substance Abuse Prevention & Intervention,  
Office of Guidance and School Counseling

## Statewide Campaign to Combat Synthetic Drugs and Prescription Drug Abuse

Public service announcements are airing on television stations and music streaming services across New York State in an effort to increase awareness about the dangers of synthetic drugs and prescription opioid abuse. As part of the new campaign, posters warning about the dangers of synthetic marijuana are posted in subways, bus shelters, and other locations in New York City.



The campaign is coordinated by the [New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services \(OASAS\)](#). OASAS provides the funding for our Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialist (SAPIS) prevention programs and these resources have been valuable tools in our work with students and their families. The campaign includes public service announcements, a new website, digital ads, social media, and print materials, featuring real individuals who have experienced the tragic consequences of prescription opioid and heroin use. In addition, resources are now available regarding the dangers of synthetic cannabinoids, also known as synthetics or synthetic marijuana. Help raise awareness by sharing and promoting this information with students, parents, teachers, school staff, and the community.

*Highlights from OASAS resources include:*



- ▶ [Combat Heroin](#) - Learn more about the warning signs of abusing opioids and/or heroin, the progression of addiction, and stories of hope.



- ▶ [Spotlight on Synthetics](#) - Provides resources regarding substance abuse of synthetic marijuana, which can cause dangerous health effects and even death.



- ▶ [Talk2Prevent](#) is a website for parents, which includes a toolkit with conversation starters, a list of warning signs, as well as ongoing resources and information about underage drinking and drug use.



**1-877-8-HOPENY**  
Find Help for 1-877-846-7369  
Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Problem Gambling

- ▶ [NYS Hopeline](#) (1-877-8-HOPENY) offers help 24 hours a day for alcoholism, drug abuse, and problem gambling. The NYS Hopeline webpage has listings on prevention, treatment, and mental health services.

# Special Feature: Focus on Attendance

## Attendance Data Myths and Realities

By [Kimberly Suttell](#)

Director of Attendance Policy and Planning,  
Office of Safety and Youth Development

*In this article, we will debunk common myths about attendance data:*

**90% attendance is required.** There is no state requirement or Chancellor's regulation for minimum attendance for either promotion or graduation. Schools, of course, can set their own minimum attendance requirements for participation in extra-curricular activities. Students are not required to make up the exact amount of instructional time missed due to absence but must master course content and meet expectations outlined in the syllabus. Note: There are minimum attendance requirements for participation in PSAL and to be eligible for Regents appeals. Both exclude excused absences.

**90% attendance is good.** At a school that ends the year with 90% attendance, the average student has missed a month of instruction. For a student, attendance of 90% or less is a powerful indicator of academic failure. 90% attendance is missing about 18 days, and can happen by missing just 2 days a month. Schools should aim for students to miss 10 days or less.

**A school's attendance rate is a meaningful measure for school progress.** This is a myth for two strong reasons:

- ▶ **Reason 1:** School attendance rate is a very broad, blunt indicator. In a school that ends the year with 90% attendance, we can only know the average student has missed 18 days. But citywide, most of our students come most of the time and it is likely that there are many students who missed 0 days, some who missed 5 days ... and some students who missed 100 days! That is why we look at the Chronic Absentee rate, or the percent of students with less than 90% attendance, too. A school with 95% attendance can have a chronic absentee rate of 7% (a few students who miss a lot of days) or as much as 16% (many students coming 80-90%). Please see the *End-of-Year CA Rates and Attendance* spreadsheet available at the [Principals' Portal](#).

- ▶ **Reason 2:** Daily attendance can be counted based on being present in one instructional period. That is why schools must review lateness, cut reports, and period attendance in order to have a meaningful and effective program of attendance outreach. Always be sure students and families are active in monitoring attendance and lateness, too, as a check for data errors.

**Recording attendance is largely an administrative function that takes away from instruction.** Classroom teachers are encouraged to take AND use attendance data, just like other measures of student progress. Absences inform instructional planning. Taking attendance can also be viewed as a social-emotional activity in a school, as it provides a moment in the day when every student matters and their individual presence is acknowledged.

## AIDP Funds Social Workers to Address Chronic Absenteeism at 10 Schools

*There are new social workers at 10 schools thanks to NYS Attendance Improvement/Drop-Out Prevention (AIDP) funding through the DOE's Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD)!*

Sixty-two schools were invited to apply for the new positions based on their below-average attendance. The invited schools all had at least 100 chronically absent (CA) students and are located in school districts with a three-year aggregate attendance rate of less than 90 percent. Community and Renewal schools, or those getting at least one staff person through AIDP funds, were not included.

Of the 22 schools that applied, OSYD selected 10 based upon how they were already addressing chronic absenteeism and how a new social worker would work with their existing policies. The schools are: Academy of Public Relations (07X298), Bronx Leadership Academy II High School (07X527), Health Opportunities High School (07X670), New Directions Secondary School (09X350), School for Excellence (09X404), Bronx Leadership Academy High School (09X525), Metropolitan High School (12X248), Pan American International High School at Monroe (12X388), Lyons Community School (14K586), and Academy of Innovative Technology (19K618).

# If You Know One Child with Autism, ...

By [Diana Hayes](#)

Senior Administrator for Elementary Schools  
Office of Guidance and School Counseling

*If you know one child with autism,  
... you know one child with autism.*

Each individual with autism is unique. Many of those on the autism spectrum have exceptional visual, musical, and academic skills. About 40 percent have average to above-average intellectual abilities. Many persons on the spectrum take deserved pride in their distinctive abilities and “atypical” ways of viewing the world. Hans Asperger once said, “*Not everything that steps out of line, and thus ‘abnormal,’ must necessarily be ‘inferior.’*” Others with autism have significant disability and are unable to live independently. About 25 percent of individuals with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) are non-verbal but can learn to communicate using other means.

The New York City Department of Education currently has two specialized programs in community schools.

- ▶ **ASD Nest Programs** provide a reduced-sized Integrated Co-Teaching instruction. The Nest Program is designed for students with autism whose academic abilities are on grade-level and whose primary need for support is in the areas of language and social skill development.
- ▶ **ASD Horizon Programs** provide a special class (SC) of 8:1:1. The Horizon Program supports students with autism whose academic abilities are approaching or below grade level and who may benefit from instructional and interpersonal principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). The ASD Nest Model Framework has a philosophical foundation which includes several shared beliefs that serve as the foundation upon which all structures and practices are built:

- ◆ **Understanding of ASD:** Students with ASD think and learn differently than other students.
- ◆ **Focus on Strengths:** Student strengths and interests are honored and incorporated, instead of focusing exclusively on areas of deficit.
- ◆ **True Inclusion:** Students are recognized as full contributing members to the class and school community, throughout the entire day.
- ◆ **Collaboration:** Collaboration exists between and across disciplines, and the transdisciplinary team of teachers and related service providers.
- ◆ **Individual Support:** Teams collaborate to devise individualized supports for struggling students.
- ◆ **Therapeutic Environment:** Classrooms utilize supports typically provided by outside specialists so students have a safe environment where they can comfortably interact with their peers.
- ◆ **Social Development:** Social development is supported through building of competence, developing relationships, and addressing internal motivation, which support independence and self-advocacy.
- ◆ **Positive Behavior Support:** Skill building through positive reinforcement leads to meaningful, long lasting change.
- ◆ **Family Involvement:** Families are part of the team, involved in decision-making, updated regularly about changes and progress and provided with resources.

**Reference:**

- ▶ 2015 ASD Nest Support Project, NYU Steinhardt.

*“It takes a village to raise a child. It takes a child with autism to raise the consciousness of the village.”*

**- Elaine Hall, Author and Inspirational Speaker**

# Office of Guidance and School Counseling Professional Development Offerings

By [Zuri Jackson-Woods](#)

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

Professional development is critical to stay abreast of the latest research, techniques and developments in the school counseling profession. The Office of Guidance and School Counseling offers a plethora of professional development opportunities that can provide you with chances to share best practices with your colleagues, increase your technology skills, and stay informed of the latest developments in the school counseling/social work profession. Our professional development meetings and conferences also provide opportunities to build capacity by partnering with the many community-based organizations that we have worked with previously who are excited about bringing their programs to our schools and students. Community partners have included:

- ◆ Ackerman Institute for the Family
- ◆ Bank Street College of Education
- ◆ Children's Aid Society
- ◆ Children of Domestic Violence (CDV)
- ◆ CUNY ASAP
- ◆ ENACT
- ◆ Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS)
- ◆ Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs
- ◆ Mayor's Office for Domestic Violence
- ◆ Mutt-i-grees/North Shore Animal League
- ◆ The Osborne Association
- ◆ Partnership with Children
- ◆ The Trevor Project

**Helping Our Field Support Centers:** Professional development topics for Field Support Center Student Services Teams and School Counseling Managers have included the following topics:

- ◆ Comprehensive guidance and school counseling programs
- ◆ The role of the counselor
- ◆ School counseling frameworks
- ◆ Social-emotional learning
- ◆ Promoting prosocial behavior
- ◆ Domestic violence
- ◆ Supporting children of incarcerated parents
- ◆ Incorporating technology
- ◆ Academic policy
- ◆ Chancellor's Regulation A-825 (military recruitment and opt-out notifications)
- ◆ Chancellor's Regulation A-250 (working papers)
- ◆ Using SESIS
- ◆ The myths and realities of attendance data
- ◆ District 79 programs and services
- ◆ Career development resources

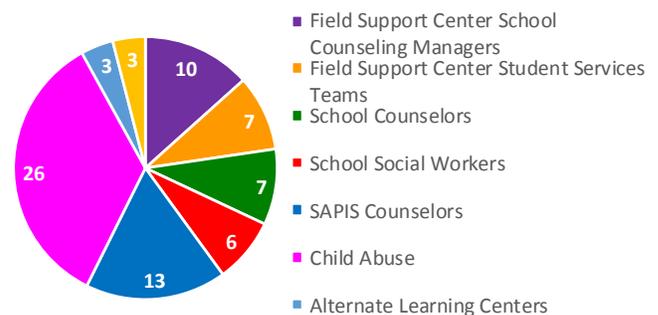
**Helping Our School-Based Support Staff:** Professional development meetings for school-based support staff have included the following topics:

- ◆ School counseling frameworks
- ◆ The role of the school social worker
- ◆ Professional portfolios
- ◆ Meetings the needs of counselors
- ◆ Related services counseling
- ◆ Incorporating technology
- ◆ Mindfulness
- ◆ Unaccompanied minors
- ◆ Human trafficking
- ◆ Supporting children of incarcerated parents
- ◆ Domestic violence
- ◆ Gang prevention
- ◆ Current trends in substance abuse
- ◆ Restorative circles
- ◆ Gender inclusive schools
- ◆ Career development

Please consider these areas as you work with your administrators and your colleagues in planning professional development for student support services team members and all school-based staff members.

In the same spirit as we encourage you to utilize data in planning and promoting your comprehensive counseling programs, the following pie-chart captures our PD opportunities offered thus far:

**The Office of Guidance and School Counseling Professional Development Offerings (as of March 2016)**



Upcoming professional development opportunities from the Office of Guidance and School Counseling are available at the [Guidance Portal](#). This QR code can also be scanned with a mobile phone. QR Reader or Red Laser can be downloaded from a mobile device app store for free as needed.



# Third White House Convening on School Counseling and College Advising

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

Key constituents from the Comprehensive College and Career Counseling Consortium of New York (CCCCNY) were among the New York State team members participating in the Third White House Convening on School Counseling and College Advising held at the University of North Florida on November 2-4, 2015. Dr. Margarita Suero-Durán of the DOE's Office of Guidance and School Counseling, and Ms. Sugeni Pérez-Sadler of the DOE's Office of Postsecondary Readiness, represented New York City public schools and served as respondents on the State panel. During the convening, Dr. Suero-Durán and Ms. Pérez-Sadler were part of a State panel presentation that outlined proposed updates to the State Commissioner's Regulation Part 100.2 regarding guidance programs.

Conversations spanning across the three days of the convening focused on identifying strategies and activities for student level outcomes for each participating state. The New York State team identified the following four metrics which are currently processed at the State level:

- ▶ Attendance – Chronic Absenteeism, which is a critical barrier students face through their high school careers.
- ▶ High School Graduation Rates, which represent the first step toward a postsecondary education or career path
- ▶ Postsecondary Intentions, which are self-reported by every student in New York State upon their



graduation from high school. This data provides insight into the status of postsecondary planning.

- ▶ FAFSA Completions, as recent studies have demonstrated that students who complete the FAFSA are more likely to enroll and persist in college

In addition, the following three aspirational metrics were identified:

- ▶ Algebra 2 Mastery, given that Algebra 2 is a key gateway course and a fair indicator of participation in a college preparatory curriculum
- ▶ Postsecondary Enrollment, Remediation, Persistence and Retention Rates, data sets which are currently not yet collected statewide
- ▶ Individual Student Portfolios to ensure every student leaves high school with a viable career and academic success plan.

Access additional details at the [National Consortium for School Counseling and Postsecondary Success](#) website.



*For questions or comments, please email: [guidance@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:guidance@schools.nyc.gov).*



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Activity - Attendance is the Key to Success.

(Note to Counselor: Provide students with a copy of their ATS RISA or RISP report. In addition, provide students with a copy of their [SMART goals](#), which should have already been completed in a previous session or lesson.)

1. What is your initial reaction when you see your attendance record?

2. Please calculate your attendance rate.

From the RISA or RISP report, take the number of days present and **divide** by the number of days present plus the number of days absent.

$$\text{Attendance \%} = \text{\# of Days Present} \div (\text{\# of Days Present} + \text{\# of Days Absent})$$

3. Why is attendance important?

4. How can attendance impact your SMART goals?

5. How would you define stress?

6. What are 3 sources of stress/obstacles that may stand in your way of achieving your goals?

- I. \_\_\_\_\_
- II. \_\_\_\_\_
- III. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are possible remedies to these obstacles?

- I. \_\_\_\_\_
- II. \_\_\_\_\_
- III. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Discussion: How can the school help you to remedy these obstacles?

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

◆ **A:C1 Relate School to Life Experiences** (A:C1.5 Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and vocational opportunities.)

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

◆ **Category 2: Behavior Standards** (Self-Management Skills: 5. Demonstrate perseverance to achieve long- and short-term goals.)

# 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 transcript updates, please let your [lead](#) know so we can learn more about your work!

## Transcript Updates

A transcript is a record of a student’s high school-level academic history, including coursework, final grades, and exam scores. In very specific circumstances, schools are permitted to update a student’s transcript in order to make important additions or corrections. When necessary and permitted, schools can update a student’s transcript to add a new course, change an existing grade, add or change an exam, or remove an exam or course.

Beginning February 2, schools must complete the new [Transcript Update form](#) before updating a student’s transcript in STARS Admin. Each type of transcript update also requires relevant supporting documentation. Please refer to the [High School Academic Policy Guide](#) for additional requirements and information for transcript update types. After reading the transcript update section in the policy guide, test your knowledge by answering the questions following the scenario below:

**Scenario:** A student transfers to a public school in NYC from an out-of-state school after his freshman year of high school.

1. How must the new school account for high school courses that the student took prior to transferring?

2. What documentation must be collected for each transfer credit prior to the completion of the Transcript Update form?
3. The school counselor just completed the Transcript Update form. What must the counselor do before requesting a transcript update in STARS?
4. Is the transcript update complete after the school counselor has finished entering data into STARS through the Request Transcript Update functionality?

**Test Your Understanding:** Can transcript updates be entered for the reasons below? If yes, what type of documentation is required?

5. To change a failing grade to a passing grade as a result of a targeted credit recovery program?
6. To change an existing grade to reflect annualization?
7. To add a course based on participation in PSAL for PE credit?

**Answers:** **[1.]** The school must add each course to the student’s transcript via a transcript update. **[2.]** The official transcript from the student’s previous school and the [transfer credit equivalency form](#). **[3.]** The counselor must obtain the principal’s signature. The Transcript Update form is considered incomplete without the supporting documentation outlined on the form and the principal’s signature. **[4.]** No. The transcript update must be approved by a separate school administrator using the Approve Transcript Update function. **[5.]** No. Transcript updates are never permitted in order to change a failing grade to a passing grade as a result of a targeted credit recovery program. In this situation, the student’s original grade remains as a failing mark. The student is then scheduled for a new course with an ‘R’ in the 7th character, and given a new grade and credit if he or she passes the credit recovery. **[6.]** Yes. Documentation must include a complete Transcript Update form and a written grading policy explaining when annualization is appropriate. **[7.]** Yes. Documentation must include a complete Transcript Update form, student log of practice hours, and roster signed by the coach.

# Guidance Success Stories

## DISTRICTS 6 — 12, BRONX

### *“Seven Habits” Guidance Lessons*

*Submitted by Vincent Moliterno, School Counselor*

The School Counselor at **GLOBE School for Environmental Research (11X272)** utilizes the “7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens” curriculum for push-in guidance lessons and group counseling sessions. In the *7 Habits*, author Sean Covey presents an approach to being effective in attaining personal goals. The curriculum has a primary focus on values and principles.

The school counselor begins the lessons by developing students’ understanding of the positive and negative habits we develop. This initial dialogue was followed by a further discussion of what it means to be “effective.” For example, “proactive” choices are based on values. Proactive people *think* before they act. The lessons are fun, engaging, and provide students with opportunities to explore decision-making and life skills. The *7 Habits* help students learn a lot about themselves and one another. Students feel empowered when they discover their ability to make decisions that can impact their lives in positive ways.

### *Back in Attendance!*

*Submitted by Lourdes Blanco, School Social Worker*

A 15-year old young man in ninth grade at a **Metropolitan High School (12X248)** was chronically absent. The school social worker setup a parent conference. At the conference, the young man and

his mother explained the family suffered a tragic loss a little over a year ago. Mom shared that her oldest son, who was a father figure to the student, was killed in a car accident. The student and his mom explained it was often hard to get out of bed. In addition to the student’s need to sleep extensive hours and a general lack of motivation, the family shared that they all felt sad and down throughout the day and cried frequently. The school social worker offered a lot of encouragement to the student’s mother as she worked to ensure her son attended school each day.

The student expressed an interest in computer programming as well as in developing video games. The school social worker discussed the requirements to become a computer programmer and video game designer. Since the spring academic term had just begun, the timing was perfect. The school social worker offered routine check-ins and outlined his open door policy. The school social worker also interfaced with the student’s teachers regularly, and the student was connected to a peer tutor for math and science. In addition, the student and his mother signed an attendance contract with concrete steps and goals.

So far, the youngster has been in school every day. He is respectful and is progressing well in most of his classes. He has begun attending a support group with the school social worker. It is clear to the school social worker that the family will continue to need support throughout the semester. His mother has been very pleased with his progress thus far.

*“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”*

**- Chinese Proverb**

## DISTRICTS 28, Queens

### *PBIS Program with All the Aces*

*Submitted by Lindsey Kretzmer, School Psychologist*

The ACE (Actively Caring at Edison) initiative at **Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School (28Q620)** is a proactive schoolwide Positive Behavioral Intervention & Support (PBIS) Program that is aimed at promoting a more compassionate and empathic school culture. The mission of the program is to cultivate a school environment where faculty and students are mindful of one another and acknowledge each other for being kind. The underlying belief is that when students feel cared for, they excel in all areas of life.

The school psychologist strongly believes that human beings innately want to make connections. A sense of belonging and connectedness are essential elements which increase the likelihood of student success. ACE's message is clearly reflected in the motto, *"Have an Impact...Be Kind."* This message helps our students realize that they are empowered and can have a positive impact on the lives of others. The school psychologist is aware that school officials can become overly focused on negative behaviors. The ACE Initiative provides an incentive to notice positive

behaviors more frequently. The program sets the stage to raise the level of both acknowledgement and expectation through conversations and acts of kindness.

Implementation involved all school staff members being given a numbered ACE wristband. The role of each faculty member, initially, was to give a wristband to a student they witnessed engaged in an act of kindness. Students were advised of the initiative and its purpose at grade-level assemblies. Wristbands are passed from one individual to another, and they are utilized as a tangible and visual representation of a recipient's positive affect on another human being.

Furthermore, the [ACEMovement.org](http://ACEMovement.org) website provides a platform for students to share their personal experiences regarding their good deeds and acts of kindness. On the webpage, students share stories about how their acts of kindness have affected other individuals.

The potential outcome of the initiative is endless. The school psychologist believes that collective effort, consistency, and exposure are the integral elements for the success of this program.

## Share Your Guidance Success Story

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

Please email submissions to [guidance@schools.nyc.gov](mailto: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 with Chief Executive Officer Lois Herrera, Office of Safety and Youth Development, and Jaye Murray, Executive Director, Office of Guidance and School Counseling, at the end of the school year.*