

COUNSELOR CONNECTIONS

January/February 2015 • NYC Department of Education — Office of Guidance and School Counseling

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Guidance and school counseling professionals are often at the frontlines of averting and responding to a school crisis. One of the most critical matters that counselors and school administrators face is suicide prevention and intervention.

Crisis Teams

As per [Chancellor's Regulation A-755](#), each school must designate a *Suicide Prevention Liaison*, who coordinates all related matters from student interventions to faculty and student education.

- ▶ Schools must establish a *crisis team*, which meets to plan the management of any school-based crisis, including suicide prevention and intervention.
- ▶ Suicide prevention and intervention is also a required presentation topic for a faculty meeting at the start of the year, along with mandated reporting. (See page 2 of Regulation [A-755](#).)

Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention campaigns can ensure that students in crisis will discuss their concerns with their counselors.

- ▶ Facilitate guidance lessons, town-hall meetings, assemblies, and parent association meetings, which feature suicide prevention and intervention topics.
- ▶ Students should know that if they have a friend who is in crisis, they should come forward on their friend's behalf and tell their counselor.
- ▶ Have posters to inform students that school counselors and social workers are available to any student who may be in crisis.

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Suicide Intervention

Suicide intervention protocols are of paramount importance.

- ▶ If a counselor anticipates that a student is suicidal, use key questions (e.g., "Are you going to hurt yourself?" and, "Do you have a plan to hurt yourself?").
- ▶ If the student has an immediate plan or has already attempted suicide, call 911 and the parent immediately.
- ▶ If emergency services or the police are involved, the NYC DOE [Emergency Information Center](#) must be contacted at 718-935-3210.
- ▶ If the student expresses thoughts of suicide, but does not have a plan to hurt themselves, ensure the parent attends a conference immediately and refer the student and family to a mental health clinic. The Citywide Mental Health flyer is available [here](#).
- ▶ An OORS (Online Occurrence Report System) report must be filled for all suicide interventions.
- ▶ The student should return with a note from the mental health clinic, which should be kept in the counselor's file. No student may be excluded from school pending a "medical clearance" or an "authorization to return to school."



Message from the Senior Executive Director

Dear Counselors,

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has defined the role of the school counselor in terms of three domains; social-emotional, academic achievement, and post-secondary planning. The three domains apply to all grade levels, K-12. However, too often, post-secondary planning takes a back seat to the other domains, particularly in the lower grades. I encourage you to re-think the way you balance these domains in your school's guidance program to ensure that you thoughtfully and purposefully infuse career development across the grade continuum.

For the high school counselor, the career/post-secondary planning conversation comes fairly naturally in the grades 11 and 12 as you prepare students to apply to college, but how does it look in grades 9 and 10? Did you know that NYS Commissioner's Regulations 100.2 require all school counselors to have a post-secondary planning conversation with each and every student, grades 7-12, on an annual basis? Counselors can engage students through individual or group sessions. Conversations about post-secondary planning help students reflect on their strengths, learn about training requirements for their areas of interest, and begin to identify types of programs that can prepare them. In other words, using the key guiding questions of [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\)](#), help students to answer, "Who am I? Where am I going? How do I get there?"

In the earlier grades, there are many connections to the world of work and career exploration. While many

elementary school and middle school counselors plan a career day, we need to go beyond this single activity. How is career day integrated into the academic program? Are students encouraged to build on the seeds that were planted by exposure to different professions?

There are many naturally occurring opportunities to engage students in meaningful career development conversations in grades K-8. How many of our schools have student teachers or guidance interns? We should capitalize on having these college students in our classrooms and give them an opportunity to talk with students about college. They can answer firsthand, "What is college like? What is a typical day like? Do you live on campus? How long do you have to study?" Or on field trips to performing arts at local colleges, plan to arrive a little earlier so that students can take a tour of the campus or speak with college students. Another opportunity is to have a mini-college fair in which school staff share information about the college where they attended. These are but a few ideas that will help students begin to envision themselves as future college students and lifelong learners.

I challenge you to increase your work in the post-secondary domain. I would love to hear about creative ways that you have developed to accomplish this. Please share your career development/post-secondary planning best practices at guidance@schools.nyc.gov.

Lois Herrera

Senior Executive Director

Office of Guidance and School Counseling

STAY INFORMED!

For comprehensive school counseling resources, please visit the Guidance Portal at:
schools.nyc.gov/Teachers/guidance

ATTN: SAPIS COUNSELORS

Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness

The problem of heroin and opioid abuse continues to grow at alarming rates both in New York and throughout the nation. The percentage of New York State high school students who reported using heroin has more than doubled in recent years. New Yorkers ages 18 to 24 had the largest increase in admissions into treatment programs for heroin and prescription opioid abuse. Prescription drugs are the second most commonly used substance among youth in New York City, after marijuana. State agencies worked together to develop a new campaign to raise awareness about the risks, inform individuals about the warning signs, and educate the public about resources available to help. 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.

Help raise awareness by sharing and promoting this information with students, parents, teachers, school staff, and the community. Visit www.combatheroin.ny.gov to learn more about opioid and heroin abuse. New publications and additional resources are available free of charge and can be ordered on the site. Another important resource is available from the NYPD School Safety Community Outreach Unit. Presentations for students and parents on prescription drug awareness can be scheduled by contacting the Community Outreach Unit at 718-730-8550. By working together, everyone can help make a difference. Join us in the fight against this growing epidemic.

Access additional substance abuse prevention and intervention resources [here](#).

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Per Chancellor's Regulation [A-750 Child Abuse Prevention](#), all designated liaisons must attend an annual training. Since September 16, 2014, twenty-five Child Abuse Designated Liaison trainings were scheduled and conducted.

Some key reminders as per our regulations:

- ▶ All school personnel are mandated reporters. All mandated reporters must personally make a call to the **State Central Register** whenever they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected (*Regulation A-750 section I, A, 1, a*).
- ▶ The N.Y. State Central Register (SCR) Mandated Reporter line is **1-800-635-1522**.
- ▶ Once cleared, ACS Child Protective Specialists are authorized to interview, examine, and access all school records relating to the child or siblings when conducting a Child Abuse investigation (*Regulation A-750 section II, A, 1, a, c, d*).
- ▶ All school officials are legally obligated to cooperate in investigations of alleged child abuse regardless of the reporting source (*Regulation A-750 section II, A, 1*).
- ▶ Exception to FERPA: ACS and Foster Care Agencies do not need Parent Consent to obtain school information (*Regulation A-750 section II, A, 1*).

For available resources, please check the [Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention page](#). For questions, please contact your Network Youth Development Manager or Citywide Coordinator, Cheryl Hall at CHall3@schools.nyc.gov.

“*School counseling should not be an extra or a luxury just for school systems that can afford it. School counseling is a necessity to ensure that all our young people get the education they need to succeed in today's economy.*”

- First Lady Michelle Obama, 2014

Elementary Schools: Supporting Students Who Feel Sad

Families do not always follow up with a referred service to a community-based agency when a child is in need of mental health support. This disconnect can leave many of our young people struggling with their psychological and emotional challenges. Although school counselors and school social workers do not provide psychotherapy, you can always offer support and guidance in school to children who are sad.

Signs and Symptoms

According to the American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the chronically sad child or the child who becomes sad as a result of a recent trauma can present any combination of the following behaviors:

- ◆ Frequent tearfulness and crying
- ◆ Decreased interest in activities
- ◆ Low energy; boredom
- ◆ Social isolation; poor communication
- ◆ Extreme sensitivity
- ◆ Frequent complaints of illness/stomach aches & headaches
- ◆ Irritability; anger; hostility

Students who are chronically sad do not present the symptoms listed above all of the time. At times, they may be engaged in classwork, laughing, playing on the playground, but then slip into one or more of the above behaviors. As we know, young people can be easily distracted. Distraction can serve as a defense mechanism to temporarily escape negative emotions. The feelings are there, but may not visibly manifest in the moment.

Environmental Factors

Sadness, or what may even be clinical depression, can be a response to a stressful life event or to the existence of chronic life stressors such as family conflict, financial hardship, housing instability, illness or a shift in the family structure (e.g., a parent or sibling in prison, divorce, or death). Students are sometimes responding to a trauma that we are not even aware of. How often in your work have you met with a student's family member and only then learned of a previous traumatic event? You may think to yourself that you wish they had informed you sooner.

Some of our students are exhibiting signs of depression after years of experiencing emotional abuse.

The impact of emotional abuse from a parent to a child is most significant because "the negative evaluation is supplied directly by the primary attachment figure" (Rose & Abramson, 1992). Emotional abuse effects self-esteem, spirit, confidence and often leads to depressive symptoms.

Counseling Strategies to Support the Chronically Sad Student:

- ◆ Have regular meetings to help the student relax and interact without pressure
- ◆ Pair the student with a student buddy for support and play
- ◆ Have regular meetings with the student's teacher to check in and to foster a supportive environment
- ◆ Develop a relationship with the caregiver and maintain on-going contact
- ◆ Incorporate the student's interests into his or her weekly school activities
- ◆ Help all students look forward to school by creating meaningful events, activities, and opportunities
- ◆ Provide a daily check-in, a smile, or even a thumbs up through the window of the classroom door
- ◆ Continue the counseling strategies even after the student has shown improvements

Follow Up

In addition to these strategies, make repeat referrals for outside therapy in your continued contact with parents. Ask yourself where the parent was when the original referral was made. The time or location may have influenced the parent's ability to accept the idea of their child benefiting from therapy. Was the referral provided by phone or in the private, supportive comforting environment of your office? Even without the provision of school-based psychotherapy, we can support students and their parents in our work as school counselors and school social workers.

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References:

- ▶ American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (2008) The depressed child, Facts for families.
- ▶ Rose, D. T., & Abramson, L. Y. (1992). Developmental predictors of depressive cognitive style: Research and therapy. In Cicchetti, D & Roth, S. L. (Eds). Developmental perspectives on depression (pp. 323-349). Rochester University Press, Rochester, NY.

Tech-Savvy Middle School Counselors Can Change Students' Trajectory

As school counselors, we can utilize technology to play a pivotal role in the school reform movement. We must learn the new methods of communication—from Twitter and Pinterest to mobile devices like the iPad. Technology can help us improve our efficiency and become more equipped to advise our students. Cutting-edge software and programs are available today to help us connect with students and families. Technology affords school counselors opportunities to have daily discussions with families, and to share resources without the barriers of space, pace, or time.

Innovative Communications

Our mission as school counselors is to help our youngsters pursue their fullest potential. Technology provides tools to help our future leaders reach higher outcomes. Our present generation is the most highly connected generation in history. Through technology, we are able to stay connected to a much higher degree even though we are not face-to-face.

How about using Skype or FaceTime to meet with guardians who are unable to meet with us in person? How about using these applications as an opportunity for middle school students to ask questions and establish relationships with high school guidance counselors or assistant principals of pupil personnel services during the high school articulation process? Technology allows us to increase communication with our youngsters and families, thus providing more opportunities for the “Whole Village Approach.” Increased communication ensures that students’ social-emotional and academic challenges will be addressed.

A World of Resources

Let us embrace technological innovation that supports our future leaders’ development. The work of school counselors broadly covers the three domains of the American School Counselor Association model: social-emotional development, academic planning, and post-

secondary planning. To accomplish our goals, we need a plethora of resources at our disposal. Technology provides the school counselor with access to a world of resources.

We cannot afford to miss opportunities to save time and money, as well as to find new ways to reach out to our youngsters, parents, and school staff through technology. Technology can advance our own professional practices, and can empower students!

Here are some suggestions for incorporating technology into your guidance program:

- ◆ Review the DOE [Social Media Guidelines](#).
- ◆ Arrange Skype or FaceTime meetings with parents who cannot attend workshops or parent meetings in person.
- ◆ Use technology to connect youngsters with others from around the world for classroom guidance. Exposure to the work ethics of other tweens might serve as a motivational tool (especially since tweens seek validation from their peers). Topics may include: study skills, time management, organizational skills, and stress management.
- ◆ Have your peer helpers design multimedia videos/presentations for promoting a message such as how to avoid failing academic classes.
- ◆ Use a hand-held device to manage data or other information (try www.pollseverywhere.com).
- ◆ Maintain a website that allows stakeholders to access useful study links, or even includes interactivity (e.g., a chatroom for scheduled chats about topics such as organizational skills, time management, or study skills).
- ◆ Recommend online mentoring programs to students.
- ◆ Send your administrators a self-running, narrated PowerPoint presentation that uses data/charts to demonstrate guidance and counseling outcomes.



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Technology 101 for Middle School Counselors



[ASCA Scene](#) is an online forum from the American School Counselor Association. ASCA Scene provides valuable resources, tips, news, and networking opportunities for school counselors from across the nation.



[Blogger](#) is excellent for newbies interested in creating a counseling blog. Other helpful blog sites for school counselors are [Wordpress](#) or [EduBlogs](#).



[Dropbox](#) is an online storage service. Just think of a flash drive without the small flash! Documents, pictures, videos, and music can be stored and shared online with others.



[Evernote](#) offers a web-based application for online note taking. Take notes from websites, or your own professional notes. This website offers convenient ways to store notes, which are neatly organized and can be shared with others.



[Google Docs](#) is a free web-based application in which documents and spreadsheets can be created, edited, and stored online. Files can be accessed from any computer with an internet connection and a full-featured web browser.



[Livebinders](#) is an online application for creating and organizing professional binders.



[Pinterest](#) serves as a virtual, visual-centric bulletin board where counselors can "pin" information, typically graphics and links, for others to view. Pinterest offers a plethora of empowering, inspirational and creative boards for school counselors and their students to browse. Users can even "repin" graphics to share with their own communities.



[Prezi](#) is a web-based presentation creator that really helps your presentations come to life. You can make your presentations walk, run, dance, glide, and zoom in and out, all while educating and inspiring your audience.



[Twitter](#) has a lot to offer beyond extensive networking. For example, a school may be presented with the task of transforming a parent workshop that typically was not well attended. Short video presentations from school counselors explaining how to increase parent involvement are available on Twitter. Twitter also features resources to create a virtual workshop and a blog site for parents. Twitter offers many professional resources. School counselors can "chat" with colleagues about best practices, resources, articles, and iPad apps. *Use hashtags, or key words following a # sign, to follow specific topics or conversations (e.g., #education or #edtech).*



[Weebly](#) is an amazing website creator. Weebly makes creating a website easy as pie!

Tools of the Trade: The High School Counselor's Professional Portfolio

Happy New Year Guidance & School Counseling Colleagues! As we begin a new calendar year and prepare to celebrate National School Counseling Week (February 2-6), let us reflect upon school counselor professionalism. In particular, I encourage you to continue to strengthen the partnership with your school administration, as this is a prerequisite for optimal implementation of your guidance and school counseling program. The counselor's professional portfolio is a valuable tool which enhances self-reflection and strengthens the principal-counselor connection.

What is a professional portfolio?

The **portfolio** should not be confused with the comprehensive guidance and school counseling **plan**. While the plan is about the school-wide program (a school document), the portfolio is about the individual professional. Harnessed in either digital or printed format (or both), the professional portfolio is a cohesive, living document representing who you are as a professional school counselor, your guiding principles, competencies, contributions, impact on students and the school community, and engagement in ongoing professional growth.

What items might school counselors include in their professional portfolios?

In deciding how to organize and what to include in your portfolio, first reflect upon your individual style, your professional goals, what information you are interested in communicating, and which artifacts will optimally showcase your strengths. As a practicing school counselor, consider the expectations of potential audiences. *The portfolio will generally consist of an introductory page, table of contents, standard items, and artifacts.*

Standard items typically include the following: a statement of philosophy of school counseling, education, and leadership; statement of theoretical approach to counseling; professional resume; copies of acknowledgement letters (from administration,

colleagues, students, families, and staff); copies of professional certifications; copies of end of year performance reviews, professional development log (evidencing delivery as well as participation in professional development opportunities); verification of membership in professional associations; and summary statement of professional goals and accomplishments.

Artifacts may be categorized according to the three broad domains of school counseling: academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary planning. Artifacts may reflect leadership, advocacy, systemic change, and collaboration. Alternate categories or subheadings might include: Family/Community Partnerships, College Access Planning, Data-Informed Interventions, and School Climate. The counselor can introduce each artifact with a brief "reflective" statement describing the rationale, context, impact, and possible follow-up for the activity. Artifacts evidence a range of services delivered by the counselor and tend to be more closely related to the specific level and setting.

Which artifacts might appear in a high school counselor's portfolio?

The following artifacts reflect a wide range of exemplary practices at the high school level.

- ▶ Items outlining a lesson/activity/parent workshop/faculty presentation created or facilitated by you on the topic of **high school graduation requirements** (view sample NYCDOE guidance lesson [here](#)).
- ▶ A Power-Point presentation evidencing your "**near-peer**" program, which connects your students with your school's alumni who are currently in college.
- ▶ A sample **college recommendation letter** written by you on behalf of a student and a description of outcomes for the student. (As with all items, ensure that the names of students and other potentially identifiable information are redacted.)

- ▶ Classroom guidance visitation schedule, agenda, and post-activity summary feedback results evidencing a **community partnership** which you have established (e.g., mental health services, college, or corporation).
- ▶ An action plan evidencing a project you have led, such as a **Suicide Prevention Campaign, Respect For All** initiative, or **counseling group** on the topic of goal setting and decision-making.
- ▶ An introductory letter about your school counseling program, written by you, and endorsed by your administration to be included in **student and family orientation packets**.
- ▶ Proposals, feedback, and other evidence of protocols and committees you developed to streamline supports provided to students **transitioning** from middle school, from alternative settings, or from schools outside of the state or country.
- ▶ Agendas, sample handouts, and summary of the feedback provided by students and their families during the **Family Financial Aid Night** or the **Understanding and Preparing for the PSAT** assembly which you coordinated.
- ▶ Copy of a customized school-wide **Guidance & School Counseling brochure** or your **Grades 9-12 College & Career Readiness Handbook** which you designed to enhance communication about your program.
- ▶ Sample career development artifacts (resumes, career interest inventories, college trip feedback, student personal statements, etc.) from **students' individual career portfolios**; which they have prepared as part of a program you initiated or which you coordinate at your school.

What are the benefits of portfolio development?

Portfolios readily provide evidence of a counselor's work. A portfolio enhances professional self-reflection and ongoing communication with the principal. Counselors may find the professional portfolio of great value during the following instances:

- ▶ Transitioning to a new school, a new position, or participating in the tenure review process;
- ▶ Experiencing a change in school leadership (new Principal, Assistant Principal, or systemic support personnel);
- ▶ Applying for advanced certification training programs;
- ▶ Providing mentorship to school counseling interns or newly hired counselors;
- ▶ Modeling for students as you help them develop their own career portfolios; and
- ▶ Planning for ongoing professional growth and for educating others about your invaluable contributions that positively impact student success.

How has your professional portfolio helped you?

What artifacts have you included in your portfolio?

Share your successes and any inquiries related to this article by emailing Margarita Suero-Duran, Ed.D., Senior Administrator of Guidance & School Counseling for High Schools at msuerod@schools.nyc.gov.

RESOURCES:

- ◆ [NYC DOE School Counselors in NYC Public Schools brochure](#)
- ◆ [NYC DOE & UFT School Counseling Frameworks](#)
- ◆ Hackbarth, S. & Greenwalt, B.C. (2001). Documenting success and achievement: Presentation and Working Portfolios for Counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development* (79)2. 161-165.
- ◆ [Livebinders](#)— Organize your portfolio neatly and easily online.
- ◆ McCulloch, L. Creating your professional counselor portfolio. In G. R. Walz and R. K. Yep (Eds.) American Counseling Association Vistas 2005: Compelling Perspectives on Counseling (pp. 227 - 230). Alexandria, VA: *American Counseling Association*. Retrieved from <http://counselingoutfitters.com/vistas/vistas05/Vistas05.art49.pdf>
- ◆ NOSCA College Board. The Principal-Counselor Toolkit <http://nosca.collegeboard.org/research-policies/principal-counselor-toolkit>

GROUP COUNSELING ACTIVITY— *Getting to Know You*

Directions: Complete the following items. The responses will then be collected. Next, group members will each select a question and guess who wrote the response. The go-around process will then be repeated. The group member with the most points “wins.”

NAME: _____

1. What is your favorite school subject? _____
2. What is your least favorite school subject? _____
3. What is your biggest strength in school? _____
4. Who is your favorite school staff member? _____
5. What career would you like to pursue? _____
6. What is your favorite color? _____
7. What is your favorite song? _____
8. What is your favorite TV show? _____
9. What is your favorite movie? _____
10. What is your favorite sports team? _____
11. Who is your favorite fictional character? _____
12. What is your favorite type of food? _____
13. How many close friends do you have? _____
14. What is a personal characteristic that makes you a good friend? _____
16. How many siblings do you have? _____
17. Who are you closest to in your family? _____
18. What is your best personal quality? _____
19. What is your favorite hobby? _____
20. Think of your own question. _____

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

PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge (PS:A1.10 Identify strengths and assets.)

ALL SCHOOLS HIGHLIGHTS

Suggestions for Pupil Personnel Services

Academic Planning:

- ◇ Facilitate comprehensive check-ins with students to discuss their report card, daily attendance, period attendance (high schools), extracurricular activities, goals, successes, and social-emotional performance. Maintain a daily sign-in sheet and log conferences via the ATS [ILOG](#) function.
- ◇ *For high schools:* Develop systemic protocols for spring term program change requests in order to avoid any missed instruction. For example, students can complete a “program change request” form during homeroom/ advisory or at the end of their school day for their school counselor to consider.
- ◇ *For high schools:* Prepare a senior certification list for June and share with all 12th grade faculty members. Plan interventions to ensure all senior candidates graduate.

Career Planning:

- ◇ Organize and facilitate post-secondary planning activities, including guidance lessons and career interest inventories. Visit the [Guidance Portal Career Planning Resources](#) page for further details.
- ◇ Plan a school-wide or grade-level career day event. Invite parents, family members, alumni, faculty, and community representatives to serve as guest speakers.

Celebrate Success:

- ◇ Organize mid-year celebratory events to recognize student successes including student leadership, the honor roll, students passing all of their classes, attendance (perfect, above 95%, and improved), and civics. Incorporate these celebrations into parent association meetings. Dedicate bulletin boards to these celebrations.

Promotion in Doubt:

- ◇ Review [DOE Promotion in Doubt resources](#).
- ◇ Review student promotional criteria including the ATS [RPCR](#) report and the [STARS Student Failure Report](#).
- ◇ Identify students as Promotion in Doubt using the ATS [UPID](#) function.
- ◇ In February, generate Promotion in Doubt letters to families with the ATS [PIDL](#) function.

Respect for All:

- ◇ Plan and support school-wide activities for [Respect For All Week \(February 9 — 13\)](#) including assemblies, town-hall meetings, guidance lessons, and public displays.

Student Support Services Team Meetings:

- ◇ **Attendance Committee:** Use the ATS [RAMO](#) report to celebrate students who have improved their attendance, as well as to determine interventions for students who are chronically absent or potentially chronically absent this school year.
- ◇ **Crisis Team:** Analyze the school’s response protocols to various scenarios that could possibly occur including suicide prevention and intervention, mandated reporting, bereavement, and natural disasters. Utilize resources including [Chancellor’s Regulation A-755](#), [Crisis Intervention Overview 2014-2015 School Year](#), and the [Crisis Response & Recovery Protocols for Networks and Schools](#).
- ◇ **Pupil Personnel Team:** Revisit all former case conferences to evaluate student progress, as well as the effectiveness of the team’s approaches.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC POLICY AND SYSTEMS

Policy Review: Non-traditional Credit Bearing Opportunities for High School Students

There are many ways for students to earn credit for educationally valuable experiences that occur outside the traditional classroom setting. These may include blended/online courses, college classes, and internship/service learning. However, in order for these opportunities to bear credit they must:

- ▶ Align to New York State [high school-level standards](#);
- ▶ Meet the instruction time requirements (provide students with the opportunity for 180 minutes per week throughout the semester/school year, or the equivalent of 54 hours per credit);
- ▶ Include a classroom/seminar/workshop component in addition to learning time spent in an educational internship or structured service activities;
- ▶ Have a syllabus that clearly outlines the standards addressed, how student learning is assessed, and expectations for students in both the classroom and internship or service components of the course; and
- ▶ Be overseen or supervised by a subject-certified teacher, in collaboration with a supervisor at the student's internship site or service-learning site, if applicable.

Only school principals can award credits. Community-based organizations, colleges, and other external parties who wish to offer credit-bearing experiences can, for example, coordinate with schools to transfer credits into a school setting for a particular student, but ultimately, the decision to award credit in New York State rests with the principal of a school and not with an external organization. When making the decision to award credit for work done outside the traditional school setting, principals or their designees (often guidance counselors!) should carefully determine the equivalent high school credit value based on the scope and rigor of the content delivered. For more information and clarification, refer to the FAQs for [transfer credits](#), [blended/online learning](#), [college courses](#), and [internship/service learning](#) and the [High School Academic Policy Guide](#). All of these resources can be found on the [Academic Policy intranet page](#).

For credit bearing opportunities that incorporate these offsite experiences, schools should maintain documentation evidencing that courses provide 180 minutes per week of

instruction, or the equivalent. Schools may use and adapt the [Unit of Study Evaluation Form](#). Additionally, schools must establish contracts in which students and parents sign-off on the expectations for student attendance, travel, and security at offsite learning experiences. See the [sample forms](#) on the academic policy intranet page for an offsite learning agreement form, which schools can use for this purpose.

Check your understanding:

1. A student completes an internship over the summer at a large corporation. While the internship was rigorous, there was no formal association with a subject-certified teacher. Can this internship be counted for high school credit?
2. A student completes a year-long class at the local community college in English literature. Can this class be counted toward high school credit? If so, how much credit should she receive? Can it count toward college credit also?
3. A school coordinates with a student to take an online Spanish class from home, while also attending weekly meetings to check-in with the Spanish teacher at her school. Can this class be counted for credit?

Answers: [1.] No; in order to bear credit the internship would have to be actively overseen by a New York State subject-certified teacher. [2.] Yes, the student can receive HS credit for this class as long as this is properly coordinated between the school and the community college in accordance with the [college courses FAQs](#). Students should receive high school credits commensurate with the scope and rigor of the learning standards addressed in the course. The decision to award credit for the college course rests with the principal of the HS, not with the college. The student can receive both college credit and high school credit, and for different credit values. The high school credit values of college courses often do not correspond to the credit values used by colleges. In this case, the student most likely could receive two English elective credits for the full-year college course, if determined by the principal. The community college would set the acceptable credit value for the college credits. [3.] Yes, as long as the class provides the opportunity for 54 hours of instruction (including the time both in school and spent online) and is aligned with commencement-level standards.

FEATURED PROFESSIONAL ARTICLE

Spotlighted by Margarita Suero-Duran, Ed.D., Senior Administrator, OGSC

Auger, R. (2005). [School-based interventions for students with depressive disorders](#). *Professional School Counseling* (8)4.

As many as 20% of youth reported having expressed symptoms of depressive disorder at some point in their lives. The fact that youth spend a significant portion of their lives in school and given the existing challenges in accessing optimal out-of-school mental health resources, school counselors are often the sole mental health provider and front-line support for the student.

School counselors can intervene by:

1. Collaborating with parents, school staff, physicians, and mental health practitioners to help the student access adequate treatment; understanding that interventions by school counselors are not sufficient to address depressive and other mental illnesses.
2. Constructing a strong counselor-student relationship built on trust, empathy, positive regard, genuineness, etc., and supporting teacher-student rapport.
3. Helping students expand their awareness of feelings through a range of individual and group activities.
4. Helping students understand the connection among thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

5. Challenging pessimistic thinking. For instance, asking students: “What is the evidence?” or, “Might there be another way of viewing this?”

6. Creating a network of support. Indeed, “It takes a village!”

7. Maximizing opportunities for students to experience success.

A “mysterious, unpredictable and frightening disorder,” depression is considered a leading risk factor for suicidality, therefore, it is imperative that we continue to educate ourselves and others on the complexity of depressive disorders and strengthen access to holistic preventive and intervention measures to meet the needs of our students. To view the complete list of guidelines, access the professional article [here](#).

Additional Resources:

- ▶ [NYC Mental Health and Social Services for NYC Youth Flyer](#)
- ▶ [School-Based Health Centers](#)

Spring 2015 Parent-Teacher Conference Schedule

Grade Level	Evening Dates	Afternoon Dates
<i>Elementary Schools</i>	Wed., Mar. 18 Wed., May 13	Thurs., Mar. 19
<i>Intermediate Schools</i>	Wed., Mar. 11 Tues., May 12	Thurs., Mar. 12
<i>High Schools</i>	Thurs, Mar. 26 Thurs., May 7	Fri., Mar. 27
<i>District 75</i>	Mon., Mar. 2	Tues., Mar 3



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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY READINESS

January 26—February 27 is [Student Financial Aid Awareness Month](#) in New York State. Despite increases in college enrollment, there are still significant gaps in who matriculates to college and persists through graduation. Numerous research [studies](#) have shown that completing the FAFSA can be a critical component of access to postsecondary education. Following are resources to support counselors and students with the financial aid application process.

Financial Aid Resources for Educators:

- ▶ [Information for Financial Aid Professionals](#) - offers changes, updates to FAFSA, changes to loans, and other relevant information from US DOE.
- ▶ [US DOE Financial Aid Toolkit](#) - provides federal student aid information and outreach tools for counselors, college access professionals, nonprofit mentors, and others.
- ▶ [NYC CollegeLine](#) - provides a search tool on college preparation programs by borough, and offers college planning events, including FAFSA completion and college fairs.
- ▶ [CollegeUp.org](#) - provides practical tips on how to complete the FAFSA.
- ▶ Comprehensive FAFSA do-it-yourself [toolkits](#) and [guide](#).
- ▶ HESC College Access and Financial Aid Training for School Counselors includes a presentation on FAFSA changes for 2015-2016, accessed [here](#).

College and Financial Planning Resources for Students and Families:

- ▶ [College Scorecard](#) - Provides key measures of college affordability and value to help prospective students identify institutions best suited to their goals, finances, and needs.
- ▶ US DOE's [Student Aid](#) website
- ▶ College Board's [Big Future](#) allows students to explore interests and colleges
- ▶ FAFSA Tips for Applicants with Unique Situations: [NASFAA Guide](#) and [FAQ](#)
- ▶ [StartHereGetThere.org](#) - lists local events where students can receive one-on-one assistance with their FAFSA and TAP applications. Also provides information about scholarships.
- ▶ [College Goal NY](#) events are held throughout New York State to help students and families complete the FAFSA online.

“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.

A success story could feature:

- ▶ An individual student who made a significant turnaround or achieved his or her fullest potential through 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 Senior Executive Director Lois Herrera, Office of Guidance and School Counseling, at the end of the school year!

Guidance Success Stories

STATEN ISLAND (District 31)

School-wide Approaches for Promoting Pro-Social Behavior

Submitted by Libby McPike, School Counselor

Since joining the faculty at **P.S. 45, John Tyler School (31R045)** in 2008, School Counselor Ms. Libby Pike has focused on supporting school community efforts to promote pro-social student behavior. P.S. 45 ensures teachers have the skills, resources, and confidence to assist children who exhibit behavioral concerns. Many positive shifts in students' beliefs and behavior have been made.

P.S. 45 implemented a positive behavioral intervention services (PBIS) program, which offers a school-wide matrix to assist teachers, students, and staff in using a common language. The school initiative is called (SOAR= Safe Organized Attitude Respect). Students, teachers, and support staff engage in discussions on positive behavior through classroom lessons, student led assemblies, and special lunch-time role plays. In addition, the SOAR team, a student run enrichment club, meets with the school counselor on a weekly basis to discuss "hot topics" and to plan assemblies around community needs.

When children are "caught" following expectations, they are rewarded with lots of praise, and sometimes given tangible Eagle Dollars. Eagle Dollars can be cashed in at the SOAR Store for prizes like pencils, erasers, homework passes, and more!

P.S. 45 also helped pioneer implementation of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). TCI has been a collaborative area of focus for the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the NYC DOE. TCI is taught through the Institute of Understanding Behavior at Cornell University. The TCI system assists schools in preventing crises from occurring, de-escalating potential crises, managing acute behaviors, teaching young people adaptive coping skills, and further developing the professional learning community. This model provides schools with a framework for implementing a crisis

prevention and management system, which reduces the need to rely on high-risk interventions. P.S. 45 is having great results with this system. Teachers and staff have reported feeling better prepared to help children in need, as well as decreased behavioral incidents.

BROOKLYN (District 88)

Character Education Through Service Learning

Submitted by Susan Fernandez, School Counselor

Since the fall of 2013, students at the **Brooklyn East Alternate Learning Center (ALC—88K987) at John Jay High School** have participated in a volunteer program at a local church in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Every Wednesday, a group of youngsters, under the guidance of an ALC staff member, arrive at the church at 11 a.m. to assist in the serving and distribution of food to New Yorkers in need.

Participation in community service has raised the awareness of ALC students. Students report feeling more socially competent and have exhibited increased personal and social responsibility. Overall increases in motivation, self-esteem, and more positive lifestyle choices and behaviors have proven to have a positive impact on students' school performance. The ALC staff look forward to this continued partnership.

BRONX (District 88)

Improving Attendance Through Social-Emotional Support

Submitted by Linda Aponte, School Counselor

In early November, a student beginning her studies at the **Bronx Alternate Learning Center (ALC—88X993) at Jane Addams High School** was reluctant to speak with staff members. The student had been chronically absent from school.

The student was invited to the guidance office for an initial session, where she was hesitant to talk and expected someone to lecture her. After a long conversation, the student walked out of the office with

a slight smile. The next morning, she walked to school and returned to the guidance office, where she learned about self-esteem and decision-making. The student went home and thought about these strategies. She began to feel better about herself, and her opportunities to be successful in her

academic performance. Her attendance improved significantly. Each day, she stopped by to check in with her school counselor. Now, the student has been completing all of her school work, and has been present every day at the ALC!

DID YOU KNOW ? ...

January 26—February 27 is Student Financial Aid Awareness Month.

Resources are available from the [U.S. Department of Education](#) and the [NYS Higher Education Services Corporation](#).

January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

Resources are available from the [U.S. Department of Education](#).

January 19 is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

Start off the New Year by having students participate in an impactful community [service learning](#) project.

February 2—6 is National School Counseling Week.

Collaborate to plan for meaningful activities to highlight the unique contributions of school counselors, including morning announcements. View sample announcements [here](#).

February 9—13 is the NYC DOE Respect For All Week.

Plan and support school-wide culminating activities for RFA week including assemblies, town-hall meetings, guidance lessons, and public displays.

February is African American History Month.

Resources are available from the [Library of Congress](#) and the [National Education Association](#).

FEATURED E-BOOK

Suicide: The Forever Decision

For those thinking about suicide and for those who know, love and counsel them.

Paul Quinnett, Ph.D.

Dr. Paul Quinnett, psychologist, developed the QPR – QUESTION-PERSUADE-RESPOND framework. QPR is one of the approaches the Office of Guidance and School Counseling, in collaboration with the Office of School Health, has recently included in professional development opportunities offered throughout the city on the topic of suicide prevention. Dr. Quinnett explains that one of the reasons he wrote the book **Suicide: The Forever Decision** “is that suicide is an unpleasant topic. People do not like to talk about it. They do not like to hear that another human being is so troubled that he or she is considering self-destruction” (p. 2).

There is no single resource that will provide all the answers we need, but the more we learn about the complexities of suicidality, the better equipped we will be to provide support. We encourage guidance and school counseling professionals to continue to participate in professional development on this important topic and to enhance suicide prevention supports in your school community.

A free e-book version of Dr. Quinnett’s book may be accessed [here](#).

