

COUNSELOR CONNECTIONS

September/October 2016 • NYC Department of Education — Office of Counseling Support Programs

WELCOME BACK!

Message from Jaye Murray

Welcome back, SAPIS, social workers, school counselors and everyone else who supports the work that we do on behalf of our students, schools, and families.

Reflecting on the previous school year and looking forward to the new, we approached September with pride and optimism. As you read in our last issue of Counselor Connections, the Office of Counseling Support Programs (OCSPP) – formally the Office of Guidance and School Counseling – is excited about the many initiatives that we are leading.

The most expansive of our initiatives is Single Shepherd, which is one of Mayor de Blasio’s eight Equity and Excellence for All initiatives. Approximately 150 social workers and school counselors have been deployed at schools in Districts 7 and 23, and they are providing additional counseling support services to all of the students in grades 6 - 12 in those two districts. With a focus on academic achievement, college readiness, social-emotional growth, and overcoming obstacles, they will also provide home visits, receive monthly professional development, and have daily access to a social work and guidance counselor content expert.

One of the groundbreaking approaches to this program is that the Shepherds are working directly for OCSPP. While they are not supervised directly by principals, Shepherds collaborate with all school administrators and staff members. In addition to the expansive and focused supports that Shepherds provide students and families,

the initiative itself encourages professional collaboration between school staff members so that they can help ensure positive outcomes for the students they serve.

Our focus on social-emotional learning will move forward in several ways, including a Comfort Dog pilot program involving five selected schools where we have constructed a project format for those schools to follow. The pilot will involve dogs providing emotional support, crisis de-escalation, and in some cases, serving as companions for a school-based reading program.

(continued on page 2)



Single Shepherd Program Manager Chrisanne Petrone, First Lady Chirlane McCray, Mayor Bill de Blasio, and Jaye Murray, Executive Director, Office of Counseling Support Programs, visit I.S. 392 in Brownsville, Brooklyn on the first day of school, September 8.

(continued from page 1)

OCSP will continue supporting our Field Support Centers through our Ambassador program, where members of our team provide on-going support by providing leadership and counseling content expertise.

Our work on behalf of LGBTQ students and staff members will continue, and we will be adding a Gender Equity Liaison thanks to City Hall's Young Women's Initiative. With our focus on equity, we will also be providing several workshops about racism that teach strategies that counselling and school staff can use to foster safe and equitable environments for all students.

While you have goals for your school year as well, keep in mind the DOE's commitment to equity and excellence. Focus on advocacy for your students in support of their physical and emotional safety by being diligent about reporting suspected child abuse, following up on suicidal ideation referrals, and giving time to both our most visible students and our quiet ones who need us just as much.

We look forward to a school year full of challenges and projects toward equity, excellence, and inspiring outcomes for our school social workers, school counselors, Shepherds, SAPIS and OCSP.

Unpacking Racism Training

Professional Development Conference

for School Social Workers and School Counselors

November 8, 2016

[Register here.](#)

The DOE's Office of Counseling Support Programs will host a professional development conference on *Unpacking Racism* for school counselors and school social workers on November 8, 2016, from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. at 492 First Avenue in the first floor auditorium.

This 7-hour, all-day, interactive, and participant-centered anti-discrimination training for school counselors and school social workers is offered for NYC public schools that are facing bullying, identity destruction, intergroup conflict, and community disempowerment, but are also committed to ending discrimination and injustice and institutionalizing substantive and sustainable culture change.



Chancellor's Message



Dear Colleagues:

I hope that you have all settled into the rhythm of the new school year and are having a great fall season.

As you read earlier in this issue, this year, we are building upon the vision for New York City schools that Mayor Bill de Blasio and I first introduced last year: [Equity and Excellence for All](#). The Mayor and I firmly believe that every child—from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade—should be on a path to college and a meaningful career, and all of the DOE's work this year, including our Single Shepherd initiative, is aligned to support this vision.

Thankfully, we have a great foundation to build upon as a result of the hard work of central, district, and school-based DOE staff members like you. We kicked off the 2016–17 school year on a celebratory note, as City students in every borough and school district made substantial gains on State exams. We also saw record highs in the City's graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and college readiness rates, and our schools are safer than ever. These improvements have all helped put more of our students on the path to success after high school, and we are proud of the progress we have made.

However, if we are to fulfill the vision spelled out by Equity and Excellence for All, we must continue making even more progress. To that end, we must be laser-focused on three critical areas:

1. **Academic excellence**, or ensuring every student is college and career-ready, and that all educators have opportunities for professional development and collaboration;

2. Unprecedented **student and community support**; and
3. **Innovation** that allows us to experiment with new programming and initiatives.

No matter our job title or daily tasks, we are all here to help achieve these core purposes. As we roll out Single Shepherd, College Access for All, and the other Equity and Excellence for All initiatives across the City, remember that our mission is to meet students and communities where they are, and provide the tools and opportunities they need to succeed. Every child has one shot at an excellent education, and it is up to us to make sure that they get it. Together, we can help all of our students realize their dreams by supporting them and their families throughout their social and emotional journeys in our schools.

I am grateful to all of you for what you have already done to make the 2016–17 school year successful. Thank you for all that you do for our students and for our schools, and let us keep working together to fulfill the promise of our vision: Equity and Excellence **FOR ALL**.

Warmly,

Carmen



Chancellor Carmen Fariña and Jaye Murray, Executive Director, Office of Counseling Support Programs, address the new Single Shepherds at their orientation training on August 22.

SINGLE SHEPHERD

Equity and Excellence

In fall 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio and Chancellor Carmen Fariña announced an ambitious set of goals for New York City schools: by 2026, 80% of our students will graduate high school on time, and two-thirds of our students will be college ready.

EQUITY & EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

NYC Department of Education
 Bill de Blasio Mayor
 Carmen Fariña Chancellor

What is SINGLE SHEPHERD?

The goal of the **Single Shepherd** initiative is to pair every middle and high school student grades 6 – 12 in Districts 7 and 23 with a dedicated school counselor or social worker who will support them through graduation and college enrollment or other career and post-secondary objectives.

What is the role of a Single Shepherd?

A Single Shepherd is an adult with the skills to listen to, advocate for, and connect students with resources for success in school, and in their future endeavors in college and career. Shepherds are experienced and able to support students in making informed academic choices.

A qualified Shepherd is knowledgeable about:

- ◆ the DOE’s high school application process;
- ◆ college exploration, preparation, and the application process;



- ◆ the impact of societal and environmental challenges; and
- ◆ interpersonal dynamics, group processes, problem solving, and social justice.

The standard of excellence for the students in Districts 7 and 23 will employ Shepherds who have both an understanding of social-emotional and person-in-environment challenges as well as high-level training in postsecondary readiness.

What are some activities a Single Shepherd might do?

Single Shepherds:

- ◆ Counsel students individually and in small groups to support their academic achievement, social-emotional development, and postsecondary planning;
- ◆ Engage parents in postsecondary planning via parent workshops, newsletters, as well as individual and group sessions;
- ◆ Present at faculty conferences to ensure that all staff members engage in goal setting with students;
- ◆ Facilitate career interest inventories, and cohort events including college visits, Career Day, or Adopt-a-College; and
- ◆ Engage community-based organizations and alumni to support the development of school cultures that expect college access and attendance for all students.

Why does it matter?

This initiative is based on a theory of action that pairing students with dedicated counselors who will see them through high school graduation and into college will dramatically improve outcomes, especially for at-risk students. Students and their families will be connected to a consistent source of academic, and social-emotional supports for success.

What will implementation look like?

Shepherds will support students at a roughly 1:100 ratio, and will meet with students both one-on-one and in groups to identify needs, provide individualized support, and assist them in the development of the social-emotional and academic skills they will need to thrive in their education.

What will we see fall 2016?

The DOE has identified and hired over 100 Shepherds, and right now, all middle and high school students in Districts 7 and 23 — 16,000 total students across 52 schools — are receiving support from our newly-appointed Shepherds.



The Single Shepherds attended a full week of professional development orientation/training this August prior to the beginning of their service.

30th Annual School Counselor Recognition Ceremony

The 30th Annual School Guidance Counselor Recognition Ceremony was held at the Tweed Court House on May 25, 2016. This event was a collaboration between the DOE and the United Federation of Teachers' (UFT) Guidance Counselor Chapter. There were 26 honorees who were enthusiastically nominated by their principals and school communities. The nomination letters referred to the honorees as innovators, positive



role models, and integral members of their school communities. The honorees were chosen from schools in the five boroughs, including our specialty districts. Chancellor Carmen Fariña and executives from the UFT and the DOE's Office of Safety and Youth Development conveyed their well-wishes, and families and school staff members cheered on the honorees. Another highlight of the ceremony was a wonderful performance from Staten Island's Middle School 51 Jazz Band.

2016 School Counselor Honorees

Bronx: **Denise Capasso**, P.S. 277X / PS 51M; **Martha Estevez**, P.S. 32X; **Eury Padilla**, M.S. 391X; **Jessica Torres**, High School of Computers & Technology;

Brooklyn: **Deborah Page**, P.S. 159K; **Madeline Robles**, P.S. 274K; **Erica Gonzalez**, I.S. 220K; **Wesley Mcleod**, Mott Hall Bridges Academy; **Kristopher Ebanks**, Brooklyn Theatre Arts H.S.;

Manhattan: **Ivette Cordero**, P.S. 30M; **Elsie Madera**, P.S. /M.S. 50M; **Jovanka Aquino**, I.S. 143M; **Maritza Villegas**, Manhattan Center for Science & Mathematics;

Queens: **Cassandra Pitkin**, P.S. 203Q; **Shaniqua K. White**, I.S. 59Q; **Gina Curcio**, Collaborative Arts M.S.; **Claudia Chapur**, Robert H. Goddard High School

Staten Island: **Erika Lisiewski**, P.S. 22R; **Helen Fuscaldo**, I.S. 34R; **Lisa DeCarlo**, Susan E. Wagner High School;

District 64 (Non-Public Schools): **Kinah Ventura-Rosas**;

District 75 (Special Education): **Jean Cabral**, 75K753 - Brooklyn School for Career Development; **Jody Doman**, 75M169 - The Robert F. Kennedy School;

District 79 (Alternative Education): **Dina Colon**, 79Q950 - Pathways to Graduation;

District 88 (Alternate Learning Center): **Theresa Evans**, Queens ALC@M.S. 53;

Guidance Counselor Assigned: **Marie Poulard**, Family Welcome Center, Sutphin Boulevard

ThriveNYC - Kognito's At-Risk Suite

What is ThriveNYC?

ThriveNYC is NYC's plan of action to improve and promote mental health. As part of ThriveNYC, the NYC Department of Education in collaboration with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will be offering **Kognito's At-Risk Suite**.

Additional information on ThriveNYC is available at:

<https://thrivenyc.cityofnewyork.us/>

What is Kognito's At-Risk Suite?

Kognito's At-Risk Suite is an evidence-based, online training offering three distinct modules for **all** elementary, middle, or high school personnel. The modules educate teachers on how to:

- a. recognize early signs and symptoms of psychological distress in students, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts; and
- b. approach and connect students in need of resources within a school setting.

at-risk

What will this training prepare school personnel to do?

Staff members will learn to identify, approach, and appropriately refer at-risk students by receiving training to:

- ◆ Broach the topic of psychological distress
- ◆ Motivate students to seek help
- ◆ Avoid common pitfalls such as attempting to diagnose

What are the details?

- ◆ **Time commitment:** 1 hour training
- ◆ **Mode:** Online, interactive, individualized, and avatar-based (participants practice simulated conversations with virtual humans).

Who is the recommended audience?

All elementary, middle, and high school personnel

Take the online training at: <https://nyc.kognito.com/>

This training is made available to New York City educators through the New York City Department of Education Office of Safety and Youth Development, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and Kognito.



Special Feature: About Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS)

By [Mary Shamon](#)

Director of Crisis Intervention,
Office of Safety and Youth Development; and

[Margarita Suero-Durán](#), Ed. D.

Senior Administrator for High Schools,
Office of Counseling Support Programs

“*This is something I can really use!*” is one of the most common responses participants have given when asked to reflect upon the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS) training. Since 2015, the Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD) has committed to ensuring that TCIS trainings are available citywide to support schools in being prepared to safely de-escalate behavioral crises. As a result of this commitment, over 1,000 DOE staff members have been trained in TCIS so far.

TCIS was developed by Cornell University, and training consists of a four-day course that culminates in a written and practical examination towards TCIS certification. The training begins with a review of Chancellor’s Regulation A-411 Behavioral Crisis De-escalation, including tabletop behavioral crisis case scenario discussions. Throughout the training, participants actively engage in learning co-regulation skills and strategies. Following the training, participants will be able to:

- ▶ Proactively prevent and/or de-escalate potential behavioral crises with students
- ▶ Safely and therapeutically manage crisis situations
- ▶ Be able to process with students to help improve coping strategies (2013, p.Avij)

Key Highlights

There are three key highlights from TCIS trainings:

Support and Teach: Competency-based trainings benefit anyone working with youth in potential crises. According to TCIS developers, adults do not innately possess the full skillset needed to *support* students

effectively during potential behavioral crises and *teach* students coping skills.

Setting conditions: Schools need to be aware of the impact of *setting conditions* which relate to “anything that makes challenging behavior more or less likely to occur” (2012, p.W92). During the training, participants share best practices and strategize on how schools can build upon what is already working. Building caring and safe learning communities will go a long way!

Self–Awareness: TCIS training participants learn that the most valuable tool we have in crisis prevention and intervention is *ourselves*. According to TCIS, before intervening in a potential behavioral crisis situation, it is important to ask ourselves four key questions:

1. What am I feeling?
2. What does the student feel, need, or want?
3. How is the environment affecting the student?
4. How do I best respond? (2012, p. W25)

For information on upcoming TCIS training opportunities, please contact your [Field Support Center Crisis De-Escalation Manager](#).

Resources

- ◆ [Principals’ Portal Youth Development – Crisis Support Resources page](#)
- ◆ [Counseling Support Portal – Personal-Social Development page](#)
- ◆ [Counseling Support Portal – Crisis Support Resources page](#)

References

- (2012). Residential Child Care Project, Cornell University. Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools, Edition 1, Workbook
- (2013). Residential Child Care Project, Cornell University. Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools, Activity Guide, First Edition

SEIS Support for Counseling Services — Training Materials

Now that the school year is under way, please be reminded that encounter attendance and session notes must be recorded in the Special Education Student Information System (SEIS) for all scheduled counseling sessions mandated by students' IEPs. SEIS is a secure, web-based communication platform and reporting system that all DOE and contracted staff members who provide IEP-mandated services should familiarize themselves with and understand. Affected staff members should enter a record for each scheduled encounters as quickly as possible following the date of the session. These entries are the basis for confirming that students are fully served as reflected in weekly related services compliance reports distributed to school leaders. Note that this requirement includes sessions that are cancelled due to provider or student absence and/or other reasons; the system enables the user to provide this information as part of the entry.

OCSF and the Office of Special Education have teamed up to put together some helpful training tools as a supplement to those that were previously available on the SEIS training page. These modules will help you to navigate the SEIS website effectively, manage caseload accurately, and enter encounter attendance and session notes. Links to these new and existing resources are provided below. Please check these links routinely, as additional SEIS training resources will be provided.

- ▶ [Recording a Guidance Counseling Session](#)
- ▶ [SEIS Training on Adding a Student to Your Caseload](#)
- ▶ [SEIS Quick Guide for School Counselors on Encounter Attendance](#)
- ▶ [Special Education Training Materials and Resources Intranet Page](#)
- ▶ [Counseling Support Portal - Personal-Social Development page](#)

For questions, contact your [Field Support Center Mandated Counseling Compliance Coordinator](#).

Supporting our English Language Learners

English Language Learners Compliance Resources from the *Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (DELLSS)* are available at:

<http://intranet.nycboe.net/SpecialPopulations/ELL/Resources/default.htm>

Resources include an updated ELL Policy and Reference Guide.

Thematic Group Counseling

By [Michael Battista](#)

Senior Administrator,

Office of Counseling Support Programs.

Group counseling is a highly valuable student service that offers not only the support of a counselor, social worker, or SAPIS, but also the added benefit of support from a peer group. Group members in counseling are also provided with the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills in a supervised social microcosm. Group counseling should be made available not only to students with mandated counseling, but also to at-risk students, who may benefit from the service. All counselors can dedicate time to facilitate group counseling. As you plan your group counseling activities, please consider the following strategies:

Getting Started

- ▶ Students may be selected for a particular counseling group based on their schedule, grade, Individualized Education Program (IEP) mandates and goals, needs (e.g., prosocial skills, mindfulness, bereavement) or personality dynamics.
- ▶ Rules of the group are established through student engagement in the initial sessions (e.g., confidentiality, no sub-grouping).

Counseling Activities

- ▶ The aim of the session is clear, and can be elicited from the group.

- ▶ There is a structured activity for the group session. Students are provided with an activity handout for them to understand the expectations for the session.
- ▶ Weekly activities can address a myriad of topics within the three domains of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) model: social-emotional development, academic planning, and postsecondary planning. The activity should always tie in the topic's connection to school performance and a vision for long-term goals.

Group Dynamics

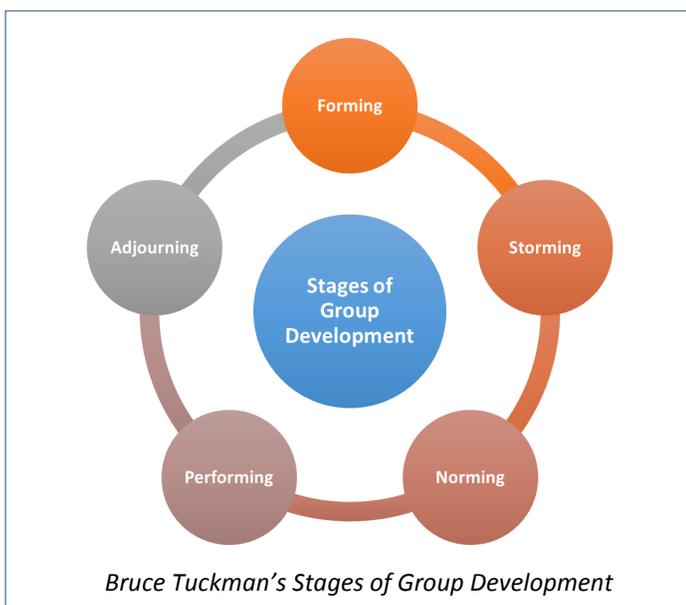
- ▶ The role of the group leader is to serve as a facilitator. There is a high level of participation from students, who are doing the majority of the talking.
- ▶ The stages of group development (forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning) can be observed (Tuckman, 2001). Group facilitators can help students to be aware of these group dynamics as they occur.
- ▶ Accountable talk should be evident. Students empathize with and piggyback off of each other's comments. Dialogue should be between group members, and not exclusively a back and forth between the group leader and each student.

Professional Resources

- ▶ Activities should be standards based. Standards-based resources include the [ASCA National Standards for Students](#), the [ACSA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success](#), and the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\) Standards for School Social Work Services](#).
- ▶ *Did you Know?* . . . Each issue of [Counselor Connections](#) features a group counseling activity.
- ▶ Related Services resources are linked at the DOE [Counseling Support Portal - Personal-Social Development page](#).
- ▶ For more information, please contact your [Field Support Center School Counseling Manager](#).

References:

- ▶ Tuckman, B.W. (2001). [Developmental Sequence in Small Groups](#). *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal*: 71-72.



Student Name: _____

Group Counseling Activity - If I Were a ...

Directions: Complete the following items. *If you were a (blank), what would you be?*

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 at the conclusion of the activity “wins.”

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| 1. | school subject | _____ |
| 2. | talent | _____ |
| 3. | weather condition | _____ |
| 4. | a feeling | _____ |
| 5. | animal | _____ |
| 6. | color | _____ |
| 7. | historical figure or famous person | _____ |
| 8. | another member of your family | _____ |
| 9. | book | _____ |
| 10. | song | _____ |
| 11. | TV show or TV network | _____ |
| 12. | computer app or social media platform | _____ |
| 13. | cartoon character | _____ |
| 14. | movie | _____ |
| 15. | sport | _____ |
| 16. | location in New York City | _____ |
| 17. | historical monument | _____ |
| 18. | vacation destination | _____ |
| 19. | holiday | _____ |
| 20. | time of day | _____ |
| 21. | article of clothing or type of footwear | _____ |
| 22. | hobby | _____ |
| 23. | college | _____ |
| 24. | career | _____ |
| 25. | make up a 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.)

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)

Developed by Michael Battista, Senior Administrator, NYC DOE Office of Counseling Support Programs

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 questions about this content, please contact your [Field Support Center academic policy and systems lead](#). If your school has created exemplary practices around reviewing graduation requirements early in students’ high school careers, please let your [lead](#) know so we can learn more about your work.

Reviewing Transcripts Ahead of Time

Graduation requirements should be discussed with all students at the beginning of the school year in order for them to plan effectively. These conversations are especially important for seniors, transfer students, ELLs, students with IEPs, and incoming ninth graders. 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 seniors’ transcripts, verify courses and assessments, and attest that requirements are met. We highly recommend that schools use the [Senior Certification Guide](#) to develop a sound process for discharging graduates that fits their school’s unique needs.

When students fail to meet graduation requirements, students’ postsecondary and adult life can be significantly affected. Schools are held accountable for ensuring equity and affording every student the opportunity to receive a diploma. Each year, the DOE conducts a formal audit of high school graduates citywide as a measure to verify that schools are discharging graduates in alignment with credit and exam requirements.

Helpful Resources

There are several tools that schools can consult as they begin to discuss credit and exam requirements for graduation. Depending on the student’s status and the type of diploma and/or credential the student intends to earn, the following may prove useful in helping students identify remaining exam and credit requirements to graduate:

- ◆ [Graduation requirements cards](#);
- ◆ [STARS High School Credit and Exam Distribution Screen](#);
- ◆ Progress to Graduation Tracker for your school (available on the [Principals’ Portal](#) under the ‘My Accountability Reports’ page);
- ◆ [Diploma requirements worksheet](#);
- ◆ [High School Academic Policy Guide](#);
- ◆ [Transfer Student Entry Checklist](#), [Transfer Credit Equivalency Form](#), and the [Transcript Update Form](#).

Test Your Understanding: True or False?

1. T/F: A transcript only needs to be discussed at the end of a student’s high school career.
2. T/F: Through the certification process, schools review transcripts, verify courses and assessments, and attest that requirements are met.
3. T/F: When students fail to meet graduation requirements, their postsecondary and adult life can be significantly impacted.

Answers: **[1.]** False – early conversations with students allow them to plan effectively and fulfill graduation requirements in a timely manner. **[2.]** True – schools are responsible for verifying and attesting that each student has met graduation requirements. **[3.]** True – by having continuing conversations with students about graduation requirements, students are able to plan for their future more effectively.

UPDATES FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT - HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

High School Admissions Strategies for Middle School Counselors

Recommended strategies for middle school counselors on the high school admissions process include:

- ▶ Review documents shared by the Office of Student Enrollment in the *Resources* section of the Student Enrollment Management System ([SEMS](#)).
- ▶ Develop a school committee to plan an articulation program and events, including a high school admissions night.
- ▶ Conduct classroom visits to inform students of the high school application process. [Presentations](#) from this summer's family workshops are also available to help students and their families.
- ▶ Meet with the families of all middle school students in September to plan their journey through high school admissions. [SEMS](#) provides an email template for families of all middle school students that can be used for initial outreach.
- ▶ Facilitate presentations for middle school families using the [2016 Summer Family Workshop – Introduction to High School Admissions Presentation](#) and the accompanying [Workshop Packet, 2016 Summer Family Workshop – Specialized High Schools](#) and the accompanying [Specialized High Schools Workshop Packet](#).
- ▶ Use NYC School Finder (schoolfinder.nyc.gov), a new online search tool, to search and narrow choices for students and families. Use the [quick start guide](#) to get started. Share feedback – Finder is in beta and we want to [hear from you](#) how to make it better!
- ▶ For the families of grade 6 & 7 students, emphasize the importance of grade 7 report cards, test scores, and attendance in terms of the data, which will be reviewed for selective high school programs.
- ▶ Promote the [high school fairs](#) and the [online information session calendar](#). The Borough High School Fairs will be held on October 15 and 16 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at various locations throughout the City.

Admissions Strategies for High Schools

Recommended admissions strategies for high school administrators and counselors include:

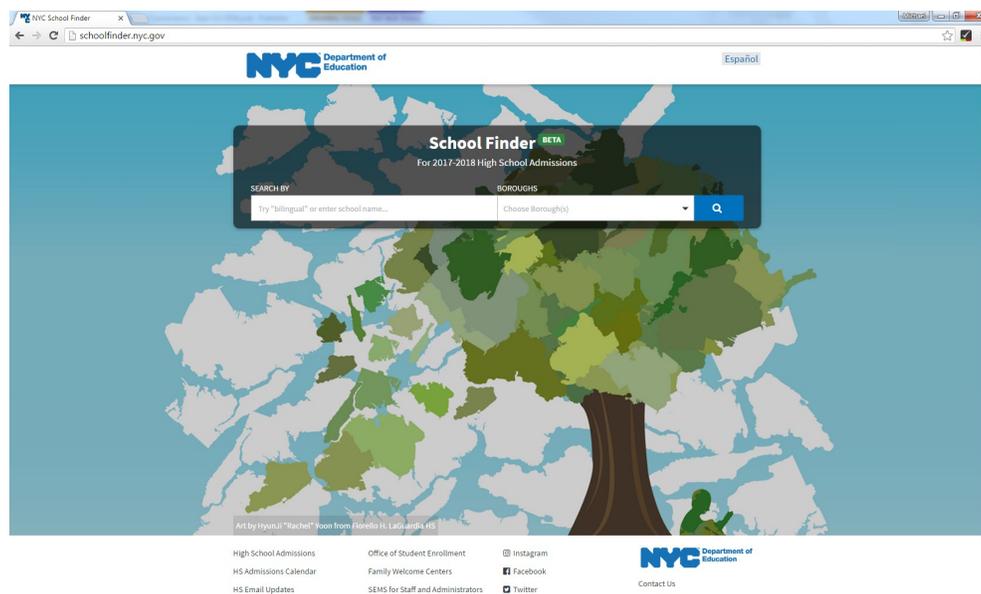
- ▶ Host an articulation breakfast for local intermediate school counselors and parent coordinators, and an open house for intermediate school students and their families.
- ▶ Work with your school community to review and revise recruitment materials; have printed materials translated in time for all fall recruitment events. Keep your web site up-to-date with information session dates.
- ▶ Organize multiple ways students and families can learn about your school and show demonstrated interest.
- ▶ Designate faculty and student representatives to represent your school at the [high school fairs](#): The Borough High School Fairs will be held on October 15 and 16 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Further details including locations are available [here](#). Prepare student art, academic displays, videos, and slideshows conveying the mission statement of your school. Ensure faculty are prepared to speak to all aspects of the school community.
- ▶ Assist first-year grade 9 students and their families with the high school admissions application if the student and family are interested in transferring to another high school for tenth grade. Applications are due to counselors for entry into [SEMS](#) on December 1. Email HSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov to request an account.
- ▶ Advise grade 9 students and families interested in attending a specialized high school about the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) and LaGuardia High School auditions. Information regarding testing/audition dates and locations, as well as The Specialized High Schools Student Handbook, is available [here](#).

For questions on high school admissions, please email HSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.

Do you help students with High School Admissions?

NYC School Finder makes it easy to search and filter choices for students and families. Please use this new tool and the attached worksheet in High School Admissions counseling this Fall and [share feedback!](#)

NYC School Finder: schoolfinder.nyc.gov



- ◆ Use NYC School Finder in English and Spanish and on any web browser or device including smartphones.
- ◆ Find schools—for example, identify all screened computer science programs in Queens in under 30 seconds.
 - ◇ Search by school name, DBN, borough, or keyword (academics, activities, sports)
 - ◇ Filter results by zip code, admissions method, school eligibility, school size, or accessibility.
- ◆ Learn about schools—it is the same content as the [print directory](#) but with links to Google Maps, Insideschools, and the School Performance Dashboard.
- ◆ Favorite schools—share or print a list of choices to share with students and families. You can also bookmark each search to use later with students and families.

UPDATES FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT - MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Dear School Counselors:

Thank you for supporting your school community through Middle School Admissions! This fall, here are some simple steps you can take prepare yourself and families for applying to middle school:

- ▶ **Attend a school counselor training.** This year, the Middle School Admissions Team will conduct separate trainings for elementary school and middle school guidance counselors. All trainings will explain updates to Middle School Admissions; additionally, elementary school trainings will outline how to support your school community through the process, and the middle school trainings will provide guidance on how to increase demand to your school. Information on trainings in your borough will be sent directly to your DOE email this month.
- ▶ **Encourage families to attend Middle School Admissions events.** A schedule of Middle School Fairs can be found [here](#). Work with families to identify middle schools that are having open houses in your district.
- ▶ **Distribute Middle School Directories.** Each elementary school will receive a directory for each fifth grade student. Work with fifth graders to complete the student activities in the front of the directory. Make sure each fifth grade student takes a directory home.

As always, please feel free to reach out to our team at MSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov. We are eager to answer questions and hear suggestions on how we can best support you and families throughout New York City.

Sincerely,

Sara McPhee

Senior Director of Middle School Admissions

UPDATES FROM THE OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY READINESS

College Application Week October 17-21 is a [statewide effort](#) to raise awareness about the importance of college planning and to support schools in helping low-income, first generation college bound students apply. Here in NYC, we would like this week to be a citywide celebration of college-going cultures in our schools and an opportunity to bring extra supports into schools. We know that you are doing college application activities year-round, but we would like you to join us during college application week to be a part of this exciting citywide effort. *Our goal is to have 100% of all DOE high schools participate!*

Registration is now open, to participate sign up by using this [link](#).

Once you are registered, you will receive:

- ▶ “I Applied” student stickers, “Ask Me About College” staff stickers, as well as “Go College NY” posters and brochures from HESC;
- ▶ Access to the online site coordinator [manual](#) and [toolkit](#) which includes checklists, student instructions and other planning resources; and
- ▶ An opportunity to request volunteers. DOE is working with CUNY, SUNY and other partners to coordinate volunteer college application support.



Student Success Stories

DISTRICT 4, Manhattan

R.E.A.D.® — Reading Education Assistance Dogs®

Submitted by Jane Nunez, School Counselor, and Yolanda Ramirez, Special Education Teacher

School Counselor Jane Nunez, **P.S. 155 William Paca (04M155)**, took the initiative to bring the **R.E.A.D. Reading Education Assistance Dogs** children's literacy program to her school by establishing a partnership with [New York Therapy Animals](#). New York Therapy Animals is the NYC affiliate for the R.E.A.D program, which is made available through [Intermountain Therapy Animals](#). The approach of the R.E.A.D. program is to utilize the companionship of a therapy dog to encourage and build children's love of reading. This program has been of no cost to the school.

"I was thrilled to help bring the R.E.A.D. program to P.S. 155," said School Counselor Jane Nunez. "The program has definitely had a positive impact on our students both in terms of their reading skills, as well as their social-emotional development. We are delighted to see their growth."

Through the R.E.A.D. program, most dog handlers/ volunteers and their therapy dogs visit their designated site once a week for two hours. Within the two hours, an average of six children read individually for 20 minutes to the dog. The volunteer at P.S. 155 is Margaret Sheehan who brings her Maltese, Murphy, twice a week for two hours. At P.S. 155, eleven students meet with Murphy the therapy dog on a weekly basis. Most of the students who read to Murphy have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and have below average reading levels. The school counselor Ms. Nunez and Margaret are always present for the two hours. The school requires parent permission for each of the students in the program.



Nancy George-Michalson, Executive Director, New York Therapy Animals; volunteer Margaret Sheehan; therapy dog Murphy; Michael Battista, Senior Administrator, NYC DOE Office of Counseling Support Programs; and Jane Nunez, School Counselor, **P.S. 155 William Paca (04M155)** meet to highlight the school's R.E.A.D. Program.

All students in the R.E.A.D. program at P.S. 155 have made gains in their guided reading levels this year. One of the selected students had average reading levels, but had been diagnosed with ADHD. Reading to Murphy has taught this student to be more focused and patient. The success stories also include a student who felt anxious in school and was frequently absent. Upon returning to school, the student quickly felt comfortable reading to Murphy. The student is now attending school consistently, and is much more adjusted to school life.

Prior to their volunteer placement, dog handlers/ volunteers and the prospective therapy dogs attend a six week training with NY Therapy Animals. NY Therapy Animals is led by Executive Director Nancy George-Michalson. Ms. Michalson indicates New York Therapy Animals is currently partnered with approximately ten New York City schools, and would like to expand to more schools. ***Please contact Ms. Michalson (nancy@newyorktherapyanimals.org, 212-535-2211) for further information on bringing the R.E.A.D. program to your school.***

DISTRICT 25, Queens

Student Leadership in Action

Submitted by Ellen Mermelstein, School Counselor

Cultivating youth leadership has been an integral part of empowering students at **P.S. 163 Flushing Heights (25K163)**. Students are continuously engaged in service learning opportunities, which enable them to use their voices, skills, and critical thinking abilities to strengthen the school community.

Students have coordinated a number of fundraising activities including a carnation flower sale and bake sale. Profits from school fundraisers were donated to the community-based organization Women In Need (WIN). WIN provides housing solutions and critical services to New York City homeless women and their children.

In addition, student leaders help to manage the school spirit store, which sells apparel, school supplies, and candy. The profits from the store are used to purchase school spirit items including celebratory banners. Student leaders also have the opportunity to share accomplishments in the student council's newsletter. This year, P.S. 163's student council elections will coincide with the presidential elections.

The Student Council News
2015-2016 Year in Review EXCLUSIVE EDITION
P.S. 163

Student Council
The Student Council has had a great time working together to plan events that involved everyone in P.S. 163. Not only did we create memories this year, but we also built great friendships along the way! Here are some highlights to remember...
2015-2016
Student Council Members
President: Giovanni Marin
Vice President: Chris Martinez
Secretary: Cody Leung
Treasurer: Caiden Wong
Principal Advisor: Ms. Managgi
Council Advisor: Ms. Mermelstein, Guidance Counselor

School Spirit Store
The school store was a big success! We sold pens, pencils, candy, and much more! We picked items that student's may need or enjoy. This taught us how to run a store and manage a budget. Thanks to all of your help, we raised \$348.75! We are using the money to purchase a Keep Safe Banner for the New School.

Carnations
We also ran a great carnation and bake sale to raise money for WIN (Women In Need), an organization to help the homeless. All of the green cookies and carnations you purchased helped us reach our fundraising goal! We can now donate \$500.00 to WIN organization, women in need, to help fight homelessness!

The talent show
On June 10th, we will have our annual talent show. We will be having performance from K-5. We can't wait to see everyone there!

Share Your Student Success Story

Do you have a student 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 Counseling Support Programs, Jaye Murray.