

Summer 2017

illinois SCHOOL COUNSELOR

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION



The mission

of the Illinois School Counselor Association (ISCA) is to provide leadership, advocacy, and collaboration for Illinois school counselors, which results in systemic change to enhance the success of all students in their academic, career, and social/emotional development.

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From the President

By: Barbara Karpouzian, ISCA President



Barbara Karpouzian
ISCA President

My brothers attended public schools for their K-12 academic experience, whereas I attended a parochial elementary school and then a public high school. It was more culturally appropriate in a Middle Eastern family to send the “girls” to a private school. As I became a teen, I understood that money was tight, so I informed my parents that I would be happy to attend a public high school. My parents agreed! I was fortunate to be accepted into a selective enrollment school in our district.

My Mom had little to no school education growing up in the mountains of Lebanon, and was therefore unable to read or write. My Dad, on the other hand, completed high school, but couldn't afford to go to college. Dad worked a full-time job and Mom stayed home. Because of Mom's inability to read or write, she was unable to assist us with our studies. As a caring Mom though, she made sure that we ate breakfast, prepared our lunches, arrived safely to school and then upon return from school completed our homework. After a long day at work, Dad wasn't always available, but helped when he could. As schoolwork became more complicated, we found ourselves working more independently. Our parents also ensured that we had proper school clothes and the necessary school supplies to be functional in the classroom.

I can clearly recall scenarios illustrating how my own parents directly engaged in our schooling. I distinctively remember a situation with one of my brothers during his 5th grade year. He was really struggling to read his Basal Reader – remember those? These were textbooks commonly called “reading books” that had short stories, excerpts of narratives and original works. My brother's teacher contacted home to meet with one of my parents.

Mom went and I tagged along. During the meeting, the teacher called over a 3rd grader and asked him to begin reading the Basal reader. She then asked my brother to read, and he struggled. “You see, here is a 3rd grader reading a 5th grade Basal Reader, and your son, who is in 5th grade is unable to read it.” I felt so embarrassed for my brother and angry at the inappropriateness of how this skill deficit was addressed. The teacher didn't know that my Mom couldn't read, but Mom still made sure to attend that meeting for my brother. Fast forward to the present, this same 5th grader graduated college with a double major and has passionately been working in his field for many years.

Mom participated when and where she could. My elementary school solicited parents to volunteer for recess duty during lunch periods. There was my Mom, out on the playground, keeping the children in line!

During middle school, I entered the school science fair. I remember it well: *The Effect of Sodium Chloride on the Internal Structure of a Philodendron*. My project took me to the State Science Fair two years in a row. And there was Dad, right by my

continued...

side, cheering for me and smiling from ear to ear when I received the recognition for “outstanding science project. If it weren’t for Mom and Dad, buying the plants and supporting me through the science project experimentation, I wouldn’t have made it to the state competition.

Finally, during high school, I ran track. Practice was rigorous and track meets were super competitive. I remember on one occasion, my Dad running down from the bleachers just as I crossed the one-mile finish line. It was a cold fall day. Dad was so concerned when he saw my fatigued perspiring body that he wanted to swathe me to ensure my well-being.

Why am I sharing this? We are first generation students. Even though our parents may not have understood how to navigate the educational system, they made sure to remain engaged in our education. Their engagement and demonstration of a strong work ethic, contributed to all four of their children’s ability to persevere through school and ultimately attain credentials that paved a pathway to a successful career.

In a policy statement from the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education on *Family Engagement From The Early Years To The Early Grades* “research indicates that families’ involvement in children’s learning and development impacts lifelong health, developmental, and academic outcomes. Family engagement in early childhood systems and programs supports families as they teach, nurture, and advocate for their children, and in turn, family engagement supports and improves the early childhood systems that care for and teach children. When families and the programs where children learn work together and support each other in

their respective roles, children have a more positive attitude toward school, stay in school longer, have better attendance, and experience more school success.”

Parents play a critical role in providing emotional support for their children, remaining updated on educational policies, and serving as their child’s primary educator. In his blog post, Todd Kashdan, a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at George Mason University shares “Six Ways for Parents to Cultivate Strong, Curious, Creative Children.” He states, “The scientific research is clear that children who often experience curiosity and wonder, and act on these feelings to explore their world fare better at school, in relationships, at work, and end up being intelligent, creative, satisfied people.” He outlines and further defines the following steps in his post:

- 1 Teach them to be flexible thinkers and doers.
- 2 Ask them to practice suspending judgments about people.
- 3 Provide an environment that supports their autonomy.
- 4 Help your child feel competent.
- 5 Be your child’s safe haven.
- 6 Schedule regular doses of novelty and challenge.

In an executive summary on *Family Involvement in Children’s Education - October 1997*, it states that “thirty years of research confirms that family involvement is a powerful influence on children’s achievement in school (Eagle, 1989; Henderson & Berla, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Ziegler, 1987). When families are involved in their children’s education, children earn higher grades and receive higher scores on tests, attend

school more regularly, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors, graduate from high school at higher rates, and are more likely to enroll in higher education than students with less involved families. For these reasons, increasing family involvement in the education of their children is an important goal for schools, particularly those serving low-income and other students at risk of failure. Increasing family involvement in children’s education is also an important goal of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which is designed to enable schools to provide opportunities for low-income and low-achieving children to acquire knowledge and skills contained in challenging standards developed for all children.”

In an article titled “Predictors of Parent Involvement in Children’s Schooling,” Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris state that parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling is associated with children’s school success, with the positive effects of parent involvement having now been demonstrated across a wide range of age levels and populations. (e.g., Epstein, 1983; Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Reynolds, 1989; Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

“When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.” This was concluded by **A New Wave of Evidence** report from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002).

Regardless of family income or background, the report also found that students with involved parents are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs

- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education (see **A New Wave of Evidence**, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002 - in references below).

All of this to say that parental involvement in a child's education is critical to that child's academic achievement!

A possible inhibitor to parents becoming more engaged in their child's schooling could include observed changes to the family structure.

Here are some interesting facts:

According to...

- ...*The Centers for Disease and Control – National Center for Health Statistics*, 40.3% of all births are to unmarried women.
- ... *The United States Census Bureau*, between 1960 and 2016, the percentage of children living in families with two parents decreased from 88 to 69. During the same period, the percentage of children living with only their mother nearly tripled from 8 to 23 percent and the percentage of children living with only their father increased from 1 to 4 percent. The percentage of children not living with any parent increased slightly from 3 to 4 percent.
- ...*The Bureau of Labor Statistics*, at least one parent was employed in **89.7 percent** of families with children in 2016. Among married-couple families with children, **96.8 percent** had at least one employed parent and **61.1 percent** had both parents employed.

These statistics point to the tremendous strain placed on families to both provide for their families and to remain engaged in their children's schooling.

Even though the direct responsibility of parental engagement is placed on families, there are tools as well as legislation that help parents become more directly involved.

Illinois has passed the School Visitation Rights Act, which includes the following statement: (*Be sure to read the ACT in its entirety for understanding of all rights.*)

An employer must grant an employee leave of up to a total of 8 hours during any school year, and no more than 4 hours of which may be taken on any given day, to attend school conferences or classroom activities related to the employee's child if the conference or classroom activities cannot be scheduled during nonwork hours

Stand for Children Illinois is helping parents engage by providing "I will Pledge 5!" This gives parents an opportunity to play an important role in the success of their child at school.

The 5 tenets of the Pledge are:

- 1 I pledge my child will attend the first day of school.
- 2 I pledge my child will be in school and on time every day.
- 3 I pledge I will connect with my child's teacher(s) and exchange contact information.
- 4 I pledge to create morning and evening routines.
- 5 I pledge to come to Report Card pickup in November.

Additionally, they provide a Parent-Teacher Conference Notes & Plan Template to help parents be more prepared for parent-teacher conferences.

Project Appleseed provides a self-diagnostic tool, which is intended to help parents rate their contributions to their child's success at school. It contains 31 questions that can be used as a guide to discover some of the ways that parents can help their child at home and at school.

Finally, the U.S. Department of Education has a section specifically dedicated with toolkits and resources to assist parents.

It is incumbent upon us as school counselors to share the research and data with our parents as a way of encouraging them to be directly engaged in their child's education. What an opportunity we have to directly impact student achievement!

Legislative Update

WINNERS

Amends the School Code to provide Title Protection to School Social Workers **HB826 (As amended)**

Sets forth qualifications to use the title of “school social worker” (Title Protection). Provides that school districts may employ a sufficient number of school social workers to address the needs of their students and schools and may maintain the nationally recommended student-to-school social worker ration of 250 to 1.

Passed House & Senate as Amended goes to Governor

Amends the Educator Licensure Article of the School Code, allows for school counselors to qualify for a principal endorsement **HB2898**

Amends the Educator Licensure Article of the School Code. Removes the date (of June 30, 2021) until which a principal endorsement may be affixed to the Professional Educator License of a person who has, among other qualifications, at least 4 total years of experience working in the capacity of school support personnel.

Passed House & Senate goes to Governor

Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act (a Winner in theory) **HB2808 and SB 1**

Provides that the Act may be referred to as the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act. Provides for an evidence-based funding formula beginning with the 2017-2018 school year. Provides funding for 1:250 School Counselors in Middle Schools and High Schools and 1:450 in Elementary Schools.

House Bill not Voted

Senate Bill passed HOUSE AND SENATE

Bill is contingent on all other Budget bills passing and being approved by Governor. Governor says he will veto SB1

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Training K-12 every two years **HB 2545**

With respect to school districts other than the Chicago school district, provides that at least once every 2 years at an in-service training program or at another appropriate time when school personnel are scheduled to be in attendance and in addition to other topics covered at training throughout the school year, school personnel who work with pupils in grades kindergarten through 12 shall be trained to identify the warning signs of mental illness and suicidal behavior in youth and shall be taught appropriate intervention and referral techniques (instead of providing that in addition to other topics at in-service training programs, school personnel who work with pupils in grades kindergarten through 12 shall be trained annually to identify the warning signs of mental illness and suicidal behavior in youth and shall be taught appropriate intervention and referral techniques). With respect to the Chicago school district, provides that school personnel who work with pupils in grades kindergarten through 12 shall be trained at least once every 2 years to identify the warning signs of mental illness and suicidal behavior in youth and shall be taught various intervention techniques and that the training shall be provided (i) within the framework of existing in-service training programs offered by the school board, (ii) as part of required professional development activities, or (iii) at another appropriate time when school personnel are scheduled to be in attendance (instead of providing that school personnel who work with pupils in grades kindergarten through 12 shall be trained annually to identify the warning signs of mental illness and suicidal behavior in youth and shall be taught various intervention techniques and that the training shall be provided within the framework of existing in-service training programs offered by the school board or as part of required professional development activities).

Passed House and Senate

Increase from 5 to 8 Sessions minors **HB3709**

Replaces everything after the enacting clause. Amends the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code. Reinserts the provisions of the bill but provides that when counseling services or psychotherapy are related to allegations of neglect, sexual abuse, or mental



or physical abuse by the minor’s parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis, obtaining consent of that parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis shall be presumed to be detrimental to the minor’s well-being and provides that counseling services or psychotherapy provided under this provision shall be provided in compliance with the Professional Counselor and Clinical Professional Counselor Licensing and Practice Act or the Clinical Psychologist Licensing Act. Restores 17 years of age as the age for which outpatient counseling services or psychotherapy are no longer initially limited to eight 90 minute sessions without the consent of a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis. Provides that if the minor chooses to discontinue counseling services or psychotherapy after being informed of the decision of the facility director or service provider to disclose the fact of counseling services or psychotherapy to the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis, then the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis shall not be notified.

Passed House and Senate

Telepsychiatry
HB 2907

Amend Medicaid law that a health care professional need not be in the same room as the patient.

Passed House and Senate

LOSERS

Income Tax Checkoff
HB 215

Creates checkoff on income tax for mental health funding.

DEAD

FOID law re Developmentally disabled
HB 461

Repeals law requiring reporting all developmentally disabled over 14 or denying FOID card.

DEAD

LCPC Medicaid Fee for Service
HB3444

This bill would allow LCPCs to bill fee-for-service for Medicaid eligible clients. Adds LCPCs to the Medical Assistance Article of the Illinois Public Aid Code.

DEAD – never called for a vote

Allow licensure after convictions
SB2053

Amends the Criminal Identification Act. Requires that applications for certification, registration, and licensure must contain specific language that states that the applicant is not obligated to disclose sealed or expunged records of conviction or arrest and prohibits entities authorized to grant professional licenses, certifications, and registrations from asking if an applicant has had records sealed or expunged. Requires the licensing agency to consider certain mitigating factors and evidence of rehabilitation for license applicants.

DEAD – never called for a vote

Changes Counselor Licensure Act and others to not allow consideration of convictions prior to application
HB3395

Amends the Criminal Identification Act. Includes federal or State public records in the definition of “expunge”. Amends various Acts related to occupational and professional licensing. Provides that no consideration shall be given to convictions entered prior to the date of the application, where the applicant has completed any sentence imposed for that conviction, including any period of mandatory supervised release.

DEAD

Student Loans
HB2394

Prohibits each university and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission from denying a scholarship, grant, or loan to a person who has been convicted of illegal possession or sale of cannabis, controlled substances, or methamphetamine if he or she otherwise qualifies for the scholarship, grant, or loan. **DEAD**

Lethal Order of Protection
SB 1291 and HB2354

Confiscation of guns. **DEAD**

Telemental Health
HB3375

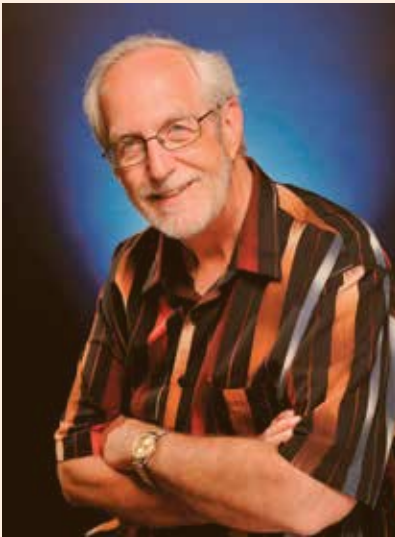
Insurance code change allowing telehealth services in shortage areas. **DEAD**

Insurance Code
HB2694

Prohibits health insurance companies from switching coverage mid-year. **DEAD**

Executive Director Notes

By: Dan Stasi, MA



What makes ISCA helpful to you?

I often think about what more can we do to show our members the value of belonging to their state association. I have never seen cost as the barrier to joining. We all find things in our lives that we spend money on because we perceive those items as worth it.

That maybe spending

a few extra dollars for more leg room on an airplane or buying premium gas because our car is special or that specialty coffee. I know some of us feel that the extra cost for legroom isn't worth it, that we can just fold our legs or that all gas is the same but we may draw the line at gas station coffee and go the extra mile to get that special Kopi Luwak coffee.

What can ISCA do to convince someone of the importance of joining. I think the decision is very different for each person. For most of our members their school district pays the membership fee. Maybe as part of their conference registration or separately from out of the school budget. For some it is a need to be part of their state association. To belong. Other want information. We produce a quarterly newsletter, a website, an app and we make available a variety of resources.

I think our advocacy for school counselors is the most significant piece. Membership fees are what funds the resources for us to be politically active in Illinois on

behalf of school counselors. There were many pieces of legislation this year that had an impact on school counselors.

We opposed HB816 that initially would have restricted the services that a school counselor could provide. With significant efforts from our lobbyist (Daniel Stasi) and our members we were able to get that bill amended so that it no longer restricted school counseling services. We supported HB2898 that will allow experience as a school counselor to qualify for a principal endorsement. SB1 amends the school code to create a new way to equitably fund schools in Illinois. It includes provisions for funding 1:250 school counselors in 7-12 grades. It is dependent upon the Governors approval and the state budget. We have never had language like this in any previous proposed Illinois laws. Another bill, HB2545 clarifies the training that should be provided to school staff in suicide prevention.

A portion of your dues is channeled to the Coalition of Illinois Counselor Organizations to provide lobbying services in Springfield. School counselors certainly got their monies worth this year.

If you have ideas about what ISCA can do to be more helpful to you I would love to hear from you. Send me an email myisca@gmail.com and let me know what we can do. We have surveyed members and we have learned of ways to be more responsive. One of the most interesting I found in our survey were the responses about things we are doing that our members don't know about. We need to get more information to our loyal members so that they know we are working hard on their behalf for all Illinois students and families.

As an association we can never thank our members enough for supporting us. I hope that we are doing all we can to support you, our members.

May 17, 2017

Dear Principal or School Leader,

Recently, you may have received a letter urging you to look carefully at whether post-secondary schools can deliver and give your students the skills employers want, the opportunity for good jobs and a return on the investment they make in their education.

At UTI-Lisle, we could not agree more.

We recommend that administrators, counselors, teachers and parents do plenty of research and evaluate every post-secondary school on the value it delivers for students. We encourage students and their families to look not at if a particular school is public, private, for-profit or a community college, but at its student outcomes.

We are proud of the value we deliver for our students. Our short-term, high-quality skills training programs have proven track records of success. Our curricula are designed directly with industry and employer partners and give students the skills they need to get stable, good-paying jobs in an industry where there is plenty of opportunity to build rewarding careers.

More than four out of five of our graduates get jobs they trained for at UTI.ⁱ According to the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard (collegescorecard.ed.gov), UTI students—who can graduate in under one year—are much more likely to graduate than students attending a two-year public college, and the 10-year median earnings of UTI students are significantly higher than students who attended a two-year public college, and competitive with students at four-year liberal arts colleges.

Type of Institution ⁱ	10-Yr Median Earnings ⁱⁱ	Completion Rate
Universal Technical Institute of Illinois	\$43,500 ⁱⁱⁱ	55.5% ^{iv}
Illinois Two-Year Public Colleges	\$28,358	25.8%
Illinois Four-Year Liberal Arts Colleges	\$41,675	64.2%
Illinois Research Universities	\$50,364	62.6%

We're deeply committed to doing the right thing for students, and our long record of regulatory compliance demonstrates that. We're in good standing with the Federal government and the states in which we operate. Further, our campus is not under investigation. At UTI, we're extremely proud of our strong record of ethics and regulatory compliance.

We're accredited by Accrediting Commission of Career Schools (ACCSC), a rigorous and respected accreditor that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a reliable authority. Last year, UTI-Lisle received the ACCSC's prestigious Excellence in Student Services Award.

You want the best possible future for your students. So do we.

We're happy to answer any questions you may have about UTI, and to schedule a tour of UTI-Lisle so you can see our education – and the results we produce – in action.

Please feel free to contact me directly or your local UTI Admissions Representative.

Respectfully,



Julie Mueller
Campus President, UTI-Lisle



ⁱ Approximately 9,100 of the 9,700 UTI graduates in 2015 were available for employment. At the time of reporting, approximately 8,000 were employed within one year of their graduation date, for a total of 88%. Per UTI's accreditor's reporting standards, this rate excludes graduates in the following classifications: continuing education, active military service deployment, a health condition that prevents employment, incarceration, international students who have returned to their country of origin, or death. This rate includes graduates employed in positions that were obtained before or during their UTI education, where the primary job duties after graduation align with the educational and training objectives of the program. UTI cannot guarantee employment or salary.

^l The data for the different institutions was gathered using College Scorecard information for Illinois schools in the following categories:

<u>Type of Institution</u>	<u>Number of Institutions</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Carnegie Classification Codes</u>	<u>Control</u>
Two-Year Public Colleges	48	Associate's Colleges	1-9	Public
Four-Year Liberal Arts Colleges	9	Baccalaureate Colleges-Arts & Science	21	
Doctoral Universities	14	Doctoral Universities	15-17	

ⁱⁱ 10-year median earnings are calculated by determining the median earnings of former students, who received federal financial aid, at 10 years after entering the school, regardless of whether they graduated from the school. Earnings are defined in the College Scorecard as the sum of wages and deferred compensation from all W-2 forms received for each individual, plus self-employment earnings. This figure may include income not related to the education.

ⁱⁱⁱ The College Scorecard does not show earnings for the UTI Illinois campus alone. Instead, the number shown is for a blend of programs at the four campuses that were operating in 2001-2003 (Arizona, Rancho Cucamonga, CA, NASCAR Technical Institute, and Glendale Heights, IL), which were part of the same UTI OPEID grouping.

^{iv} The completion rate for UTI's Illinois campus is available in The College Scorecard Data, and is calculated using first-time, full-time students graduating within 150% of program length. Students who attend a two-year public college and subsequently transfer to, and graduate from a four-year college are included as non-graduates in the two-year public college's graduation rate.

A LETTER FROM U.S. SENATOR Richard J. Durbin

May 3, 2016

Dear Principal/Teacher/Counselor:

As I have each of the past two academic years, I write to ask for your help to ensure that your students are receiving honest and accurate information about their higher education options.

Every day, your students are bombarded by flashy advertisements from for-profit colleges offering a quick and easy enrollment process, federal financial assistance, flexible schedules, and a promised path to high-paying jobs and a better life. But too often it doesn't work out that way. I have heard too many stories of Illinois students, often low-income or minority students, who thought they were doing the right thing by enrolling in a for-profit college. Instead, they're left with a worthless degree that employers don't recognize as a legitimate credential, credits that don't transfer, and almost twice the average debt of their fellow students who attended traditional public schools. For-profit colleges account for a staggering 40 percent of all federal student loan defaults despite enrolling only ten percent of all college students. Those two numbers – 10 percent of the students, 40 percent of student loan defaults – tell a heartbreaking story of student exploitation.

In recent years, widespread fraud and abuse by for-profit colleges has been exposed and gained national attention. Nearly every major for-profit college is facing increased scrutiny from federal and state agencies for a variety of abuses including fraudulent marketing and recruiting practices, falsifying job placement rates, and predatory lending practices. In January, the Department of Education took action to deny Computer Systems Institute, which operates in the Chicagoland area, continued participation in the federal Title IV program for falsifying job placement rates and other misconduct. According to a chart published by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and other publicly available information, the following for-profit companies that operate campuses or programs in Illinois are facing active investigations or lawsuits by the Illinois Attorney General, other state Attorneys General, and/or federal agencies:

- Apollo Group – operates the University of Phoenix
- Bridgepoint Education – operates Ashford University
- Career Education Corporation – operates American Intercontinental University, Colorado Technical University
- DeVry, Inc.
- ITT Educational Services, Inc. – operates ITT Technical Institutes
- Kaplan – operates Kaplan University Online
- Universal Technical Institute

What's more, when students are misled or taken advantage of, a tactic called mandatory arbitration – widely employed by the for-profit college industry but unheard of in traditional higher education – prevents them from suing the school in court. Instead students are forced into a secret dispute resolution process where the deck is stacked against the victim and which hides the school's wrongdoing.

In addition, a number of for-profit companies operating in Illinois are part of the Department of Education's most recent Heightened Cash Monitoring (HCM) list, which means they are under stricter scrutiny by the Department for financial or compliance issues. This list serves, in the words of Under Secretary of Education Ted Mitchell, as a "caution light" for students. Companies operating in Illinois with schools on HCM include:

- Career Education Corporation – operates American Intercontinental University, Colorado Technical University
- Education Management Corporation – operates The Illinois Institutes of Art, Argosy University, Brown Mackie
- ITT Educational Services, Inc. – operates ITT Technical Institutes
- Laureate Education, Inc. – operates Kendall College
- Taylor Business Institute
- Vatterott Educational Centers, Inc. – operates Vatterott College

I ask you to use your professional position to ensure your students have the knowledge to protect themselves from colleges and universities with records of exploiting students, including information on investigations and lawsuits by government agencies. You should also help your students access data on student outcomes, like graduation and default rates, through resources like the President's College Scorecard.

Finally, it is important that students understand there are alternatives to for-profit colleges. Unfortunately, a recent survey by Public Agenda found that 75 percent of for-profit college students didn't consider public or non-profit colleges before enrolling in a for-profit school. Community colleges often offer similar programs as for-profits and at a fraction of the cost with credits that will transfer to other schools. I encourage you to work closely with your local community colleges and other not-for-profit institutions and organizations to ensure students have information on quality, low-cost higher education options.

I hope you will give serious consideration to my request. I look forward to working with you on behalf of Illinois students.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2015/01/15/danger-zone-universal-technical-institute-uti/#6ebdd9ca2bba>

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S ROLE

in Supporting the LGBTQ Community

Patterson-Mills, S., Associate Professor; Rankins, M., Assistant Dean of Counseling; Gunn, R., School Counseling Graduate Student & Geiler, M., M.A. Lindenwood University

As an ever more inclusive lens has been applied to considerations of diversity in the contemporary society of the United States, a greater understanding of sexual minority and gender variant persons has arguably become ever more important for school counselors and other persons employed in school settings. Because puberty can be a time of questioning and exploration of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and a range of other emotionally charged elements of change during the teen years (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009), school counselors are likely to encounter many students who may be seeking to establish various identities. In the absence of an understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex persons and their allies, however, addressing issues that may prove salient with LGBTQ students can be challenging. Yet the very high rates of school bullying (60-70%) and youth partner violence (nearly 50%) present in schools (Langedderfer-Magruder, Walls, Kattari, Whitfield, & Ramos, 2016), along with increased risk of suicide among LGBTQ youth, compel the school counselor to acquire and effectively apply appropriate knowledge of these students and their issues.

Sexual orientation, defined as “the sex(es) and/or gender(s) to which you are romantically and/or sexually attracted” by Garvey (2016), can be further specified with a range of terms including straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and asexual. Gender identity has been defined by the American Psychological Association (2015) as “a person’s deeply-felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male, a girl, a woman,

or female, or an alternative gender...that may or may not correspond to a person’s sex assigned at birth or to a person’s primary or secondary sex characteristics” (p. 834). Gender expression has been defined as “the presentation of an individual, including physical appearance, clothing choice and accessories, and behaviors that express aspects of gender identity or role” (American Psychological Association, 2015, p. 835). It should be noted that gender expression may or may not conform to the gender identity held by an individual. A range of terms associated with gender identity and gender expression may include cisgender, transgender, agender, and genderqueer. These terms may be increasingly familiar to many school counselors and other persons, including students and their parents. However, this terminology continues to evolve and can be confusing to educators and students alike. In discussions surrounding sexual orientation, gender orientation, and gender expression it is important to help students, parents, administrators, faculty, and staff access accurate information intended to impart clarity. Appendix A includes definitions for the aforementioned terms.

LGBTQ Bullying in K-12 Settings

Research has indicated an increased incidence of bullying and victimization for LGBTQ students in K-12 educational settings (Langedderfer-Magruder et al, 2016; Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014; Payne & Smith, 2014). Although estimates of the rates of bullying varied, findings indicated that up to 70% of LGBTQI persons experienced bullying. Of these, 59% of victims reported the incidents were witnessed by a teacher (Edwards-Leper, 2016). Such findings have promoted a sense that in general, middle schools and high schools in the United States remained unsafe for many of these students (Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer,

& Boesen, 2014). The critical importance of a sense of safety described by Maslow in previous decades (Maslow, 1970) remains essential for the emotional health and well-being of all persons in our modern age. Evidence demonstrates, however, that challenges to safety may emerge early in the experiences of youth in the schools, with a very large number of gender variant individuals identifying with their preferred gender in childhood, even before entering elementary school (Vanderburgh, 2008). As reported by Shilo and Savaya (2011) the average age of openly identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual has continued to drop in the United States. Even as they reported 16 as the average age of “coming out,” they also found that in previous decades, a network of supportive family and friends continued to be important to these young persons. In the absence of such support, increased levels of stress and depression were more likely. Such findings strongly suggest that cultivating and maintaining a sheltering and supportive milieu for LGBTQ students in the schools would yield considerable benefits. Professional school counselors are ideally prepared to foster such a secure environment, and to enlist the support of others to accomplish this.



Considerations When Working With LGBTQ Youth

Despite the potential for heightened risks, many strategies for promoting mental health and wellness in K-12 settings are emergent from existing research. Birkett and his colleagues (2009) identified two primary contextual factors that moderate the incidence of bullying. These were defined as a positive school climate, in conjunction with an absence of homophobic victimization. In a study of more than 7,000 students of which 15% of participants identified as LGBTQ, students who experienced this combination of factors reported lower levels of depression, suicidal ideation, truancy, and substance use (Birkett et al., 2009). These findings suggested that schools can reduce negative outcomes for LGBTQ students. Such research lends support for establishing and enforcing a zero tolerance policy in the K-12 setting. Such a policy clarifies that bullying of any type will not be allowed to exist as a part of the school climate or culture.

Fear and anxiety are frequently reported by educators interacting with transgender youth in the classroom (Payne & Smith, 2014). Because these reactions can negatively impact the learning environment, the authors proposed that such fears should be actively addressed

continued...

and explored. They proposed that “we must face our own fears” for the benefit of those who do not fit neatly into a framework of dichotomous genders that in fact does not exist. School counselors can educate themselves and others concerning appropriate language and terminology, reducing anxieties about that which is misunderstood or unknown. Indeed, the ethical obligation of the school counselor includes advocating for student’s and families’ values, beliefs, sexual orientation, and gender identification (ASCA Code of Ethics, 2016). School counselors are further compelled to promote protection of at-risk populations, and should contribute to a culture of nondiscrimination that preserved the dignity of the student. Through enlisting district administrators, faculty, and other school personnel in an effort to reduce bullying and harassment, the school counselor thereby fulfills the ethical responsibility described by the American School Counselor Association. Such responsibility also includes remaining knowledgeable with regard to legislative changes, and reporting incidents of bullying as related to Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972.

A wealth of resources are available for school counselors seeking to enhance their own knowledge, and to enrich their schools and communities. A number of organizations have become well established as providers of appropriate resources for educators as well as parents and families.

Table One. Resources for School Counselors.

Organization	Populations Served
Onlineschools.org	LGBTQ resources for students, parents and educators- IL
PFLAG	Families and individuals in LGBTQ community- IL
lgbtq.illinoisstate.edu	LGBTQ resources, for individuals and families living in IL

In dispelling a common misconception, it should be noted that as has been demonstrated in literature focused on teen suicide, asking about a sensitive topic does not introduce a novel topic into the mind of a student. Instead, introducing the topic of sexual orientation or gender identity can offer students an opportunity to constructively discuss a subject that may be a source of stress or confusion. Through a combination of basic counseling and introduction of accurate terminology and language, the school counselor can help students reflect on their own values, attitudes, and beliefs, encouraging communication promoted by a foundation of appropriate language and techniques for establishing dialogue. The counselor can provide encouragement, and assess what existing network of support may be available for the student. If the counselor determines that support does not exist in the home, it is possible to promote the most supportive environment possible in the school setting.

Additionally, the counselor should identify community resources such as PFLAG, Growing American Youth, HRC, LGBTQ community centers, and similar local resources that may exist. If accessible, such resources can provide ongoing, long-term support for students. Often, environmental stressors such as bias and intolerance can be mitigated through such support, along with an appropriate focus on the characteristics of the environment as the primary factors leading to what might otherwise seem to be issues emerging from the student. As with members of other groups, through promoting a strengths based approach that seeks to connect the student with appropriate, supportive resources – thereby helping to build the student, rather than diagnosing them – it is possible to promote empowerment for LGBTQ youth (Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D’Andrea, 2010).

Because of the progressive nature of both language and social construction, the concepts described herein remain fluid and dynamic, continuing to evolve over time. Also, each child does possess unique characteristics and may not fit precisely within the parameters

of definition which have been established in response to other constructs of identity that also represented a poor fit.

The information presented in this article represents a snapshot of select issues related to LGBTQ students. A greatly expanded exploration of these students, the greater LGBTQ communities, and the nature of change within these groups and communities over time will remain necessary in effectively serving youth in need during the years ahead. The professional school counselor's training in diversity, advocacy, and school to community relationship building is ideally suited to continue such exploration. Such training also positions counselors to encourage the education of students, parents, teachers, faculty, administrators, and all other members of K-12 communities with regard to promoting a climate of inclusivity for all learners, including LGBTQ youth and their allies.

Appendix A. Current Literature Terms.

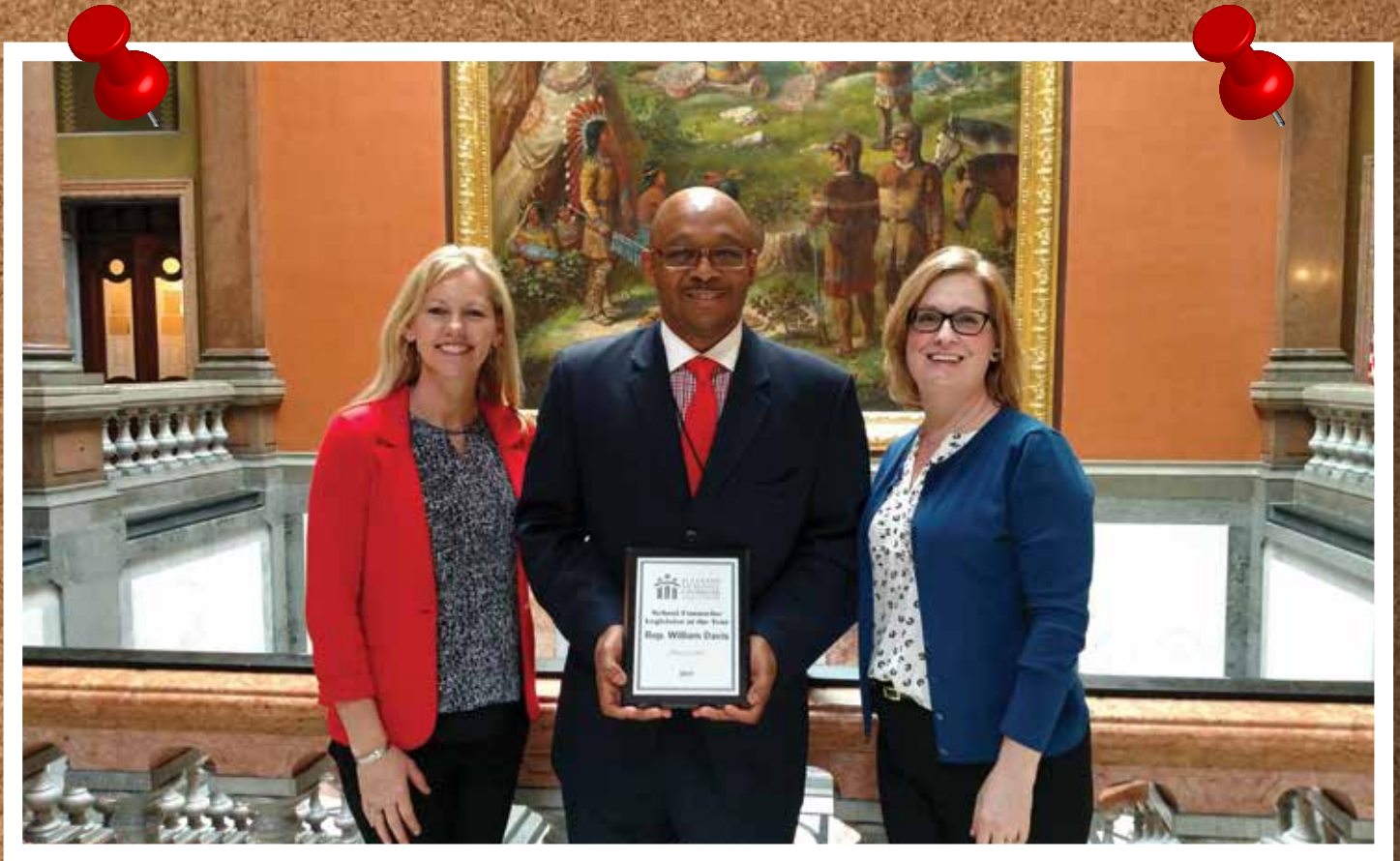
Transgender Terms by Gender	
Girls who identify as Boys	Boys who identify as Girls
Transmale	Transfemale
Transgender male	Transgender female
Gender Non-Conforming	One who does not identify with one's biological gender
Additional Transgender Terms	
Cisgender individuals	Current gender biological identity matches their psychological identity
Gender Typicality	Being culturally typical within one's gender identity

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2017

ISCA Award Winners



Legislator of the year award • Rep. Willams Davis

Pictured from left to right: Sherri McLaughlin - Past ISCA President, Rep. Williams Davis, Dr. Erin Mason - Past ISCA President

RayPiagentini
High School Counselor of the Year



Breann Tomaso
School Counselor
Elgin High School



Elementary School Counselor of the Year



Kirsten Perry
School Counselor
Lawdale Community Academy



Middle School Counselor of the Year



Michelle Madden
School Counselor
Thomas Jefferson Junior High



RayPiagentini
High School Counselor of the Year



Carla Elliff
School Counselor
Collinsville High School



Elementary School Counselor of the Year



Stephanie Haugh
School Counselor
Monroe Center Grade School



Middle School Counselor of the Year



Danielle Jackson
School Counselor
Carl Sandburg High School



School Counselor Legislator of the Year




Rep. William Davis
Illinois Representative
Illinois State Representative



Graduate Student Counselor of the Year




Alexa Kaufmann
Graduate Student
Jacksonville High School



Graduate Student Counselor of the Year




Jan Gaetjens
Counseling Intern
Phoenix Military Academy



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Dr. Erin Mason
Keynote Speaker



Friends of ISCA Award




Dr. Melissa Ockerman
Keynote Speaker



Friends of ISCA Award




Jack Royhl
Board Member



Friends of ISCA Award




Sherry Thomas
Board Member



School Administrator of the Year




Mark Grishaber
Principal
Taft High School



ISCA Counselor Advocate of the Year




Lisa Micele
Director of College Counseling
University of Illinois
Laboratory High School



Honorable Mention

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 Middle School Counselor of the Year 2017 **Catherine Chambers**
 Ray Piagentini High School Counselor of the Year 2017 **Sheila Rudden Shorey**
 Ray Piagentini High School Counselor of the Year 2017 **Maryjane Resendiz**
 Ray Piagentini High School Counselor of the Year 2017 **Heidi Truax**
 Ray Piagentini High School Counselor of the Year 2017 **Jennifer Enrietta**
 Ray Piagentini High School Counselor of the Year 2017 **Lisa Micele**
 Ray Piagentini High School Counselor of the Year 2017 **Amber Swanson**
 Graduate Student of the Year 2017 **Elizabeth Galka**
 Graduate Student of the Year 2017 **Grace Itter**
 Graduate Student of the Year 2017 **Alexandra Lloyd**
 Graduate Student of the Year 2017 **Brittani Rutelli**

ISCA Past President Award




Sherri McLaughlin
Past President



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South High School

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THE POWER OF

School Counselor Connections

“What kinds of relationships lead to the growth of people in them? What kinds of relationships diminish or destroy people?”

Miller & Stiver, 1997, p. 24

These words found in the *The Healing Connection*, challenge counselors and clients to understand the dynamical phenomena that occurs in relationship. When synergy occurs in relationships due to shared vulnerability and commitment, the results are immeasurable not just on the people in relationship but in all other relationships as well. Edwards (2013) described this relationship as an interconnectedness between systems that are interrelated. That is, they have isomorphic properties. Edwards wrote “I assume that all systems in relationship will have this correspondence and thus will be open to the potentiality of influence, when recognized. Conceiving of a client system, be it individual, family, or group, the interconnectedness of those systems with their own systems are also affected by the connection to a counselor, as there is an interconnection between the supervisory and the counselor they have been asked to help. A change in one part of the system will create a change in the corresponding parts” (Edwards, 2013, p. 48). So, why does this all matter for school counselors? For those of you that had the opportunity to attend one or both of the State ISCA conferences, the connections made were evident of growth fostering experiences that I

am sure have impacted students and schools in the days and weeks that followed.

Conference Reflections

At both conferences, we were inspired by the connecting themes offered by Dr Erin Mason and Dr. Melissa Ockerman. The message they shared was embedded in connecting stories of several school counselors working with students, mentoring other counselors, and in supervision experiences. Using [101 Solutions for School Counselors and Leaders in Challenging Times](#) (Chen-Hayes, Ockerman, & Mason, 2013), they shared stories of highly creative counselors that used their connections to overcome barriers often faced by school counselors. Their inspiring address not only spoke to their own connecting experiences and the powerful results they have experienced but also challenged all conference participants to share their experiences with others and to make authentic connections with each other throughout the conference. Their impact on setting the stage for two successful conferences was clearly evident. Several participants personally shared with me how affected they were by the positive spirit clearly evident in both conferences and how they

were looking forward to sharing what they had learned with their schools.

The conference also benefitted from the stalwart leadership of Dan Stasi, ISCA Executive Director who, with his extremely confident and committed staff, provided all of the behind the scenes support that often goes unnoticed. Leslie Goines, ISCA President-Elect-Elect did a masterful job in leading her team to select an excellent assortment of conference presentations this year. If you were at the conference and felt there was a session you would have liked, prepare one yourself or tap counselor leaders you know. The more diverse and interactive the ISCA conference sessions are, the more participants take away from their conference experience.

Finally, a significant debt of gratitude goes to Dr. Katherine Wix. She served on the conference session selection committee but most importantly, the entire awards selection process. She took a valued part of the ISCA identity, to recognize counselor leaders, and added elements to the presentation and selection process that brought heightened meaning to all of the awards given at both conferences. I hope that all of you that attended or maybe didn't attend this year make a commitment to attend one of the conferences next April as ISCA membership continues to grow and impact students across Illinois.

Why Connections Matter

As I reflect on my 20 years working as a school counselor, administrator, and supervisor, I can say with confidence that the most significant influence on my professional development has been my professional relationships both at my school and with counselors through ISCA. The professional relationships I have had with counselors across the state have challenged me, caused me to stretch my counseling identity, and have always offered

unwavering support during times of celebration and challenge. If I had not taken advantage of the offer made by a former ISCA leader to come to a board meeting and get involved, I would not be the counselor, supervisor, or educator I am today. I am a product of all of the fabulous leaders I have been fortunate to connect with in authentic ways throughout my career. I have said to new counselors that "if you work in isolation, you will make mistakes." If you find yourself in professional isolation, reach out to another counselor, or to ISCA! If you have a great idea that other school counselors would benefit from, share it! I know that others may be looking to receive the gifts you are willing to offer.

Action Steps for School Counselors to Cultivate Connections

- See the glass as half full (or at least try to). Optimism attracts those who seek connections.
- Listen, not just hear, what your colleague share with you. Do you try and think of what you will say next in a conversation or offer words of understanding and empathy?
- Build collaborative structures between stakeholders.
- Challenge isolated counseling practice.
- Advocate for time for school counselors to professionally connect in supervision, consultation, or in professional learning communities.
- Share your professional experiences with others. We all struggle from time to time. It helps to know we are not in the work alone.
- Get involved in ISCA (or at least attend a professional workshop or conference)

- When you attend, meet at least two people from different schools that you can call to consult with regarding new ideas or to work through areas of being professionally stuck.
- Build on strengths as opposed to surfing on problems.
- Understand the isomorphic possibilities of your professional connections on students and families.

I hope the summer break brings much needed time for reflection, rejuvenation, and recommitments for the next school year. As your ISCA President next year, I hope to hear from school counselors across the state about the great work you are doing and how your professional organization can help you. Please visit the ISCA website for wide variety of resources and contact information for your ISCA Board. See you in the fall!

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“So, What do you know about college?”

A conversational piece on student perceptions of college and ways it impact decision making for post-secondary life.

“I’m not sure if I even want to go to college. Why do I have to waste time sitting here planning for something that may never happen?”

I have been a school counselor for twelve years and I have heard this statement blurted out at me every once in a while from students. So, sometimes the urge is to quickly retort with “Well, if you do not plan, you are missing out on opportunities to get the education possible in order to get a successful job as an adult.” Yes, this is a true statement, but these students are speaking from a number of factors that need to be explored before retorting with that statement. A number of the factors include fear, misinformation, feeling unready, and family/peer messaging. In my practice, students who have spoken in this way, I have asked them one simple question that strikes in a profound way... **“What do you know about college?”**

Recently, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has presented a new requirement for all Chicago Public High Schools students, starting with the class of 2020, to show proof of their own post-secondary plan as a graduation requirement. There has been debate as to how this plan will be implemented and how will it affect students coming from various neighborhoods and various socio-economic status. Will this be an effective tool to positively impact the following?

- % of students graduating high school
- % of students accepted into a post-secondary program (college, trades/apprenticeship, military, service/gap year program or job offer
- % of students enrolling in the above stated programs

While it may be too early to determine this, I have experienced students who have utilized the knowledge about post-secondary planning, put it to good use. This occurs with the amount of exposure to information about post-secondary options, myth busting, and adults supporting them through post-secondary transitions. With this new requirement for Chicago students, it is imperative that we as counselors begin reaching out to our students as they come in as freshmen so that the plans they make are accessible and intentional. After all, the decisions that our students are making will impact their adult lives.

Information is key. When I ask students, “What do you know about college?” A number of them describe four year institutions, which they tend to articulate as being too rigorous and a far reach. One thing that I have always pointed out to students throughout my twelve year experience is that “Everyone can go be successful after high school.” Although, this statement is up for interpretation, one statement that resonates is that in order to sustain even living-wage employment, you need an additional piece of paper after high school.

In order to plan for post-secondary, some preliminary work needs to be in place: addressing beliefs about college, social-emotional factors affecting their post-secondary choices, and what they can do now to plan for their goals.

Beliefs about college:

Take a quick second to think back when you were a child. What did you believe college was? Was college something that you could achieve at that time? What colleges were familiar to you?

How did you plan for life after high school and who was there to support your decisions?

I think back briefly to my experience as a child in which I knew from the time I was three years old, that I was going to college. My parents described college to me as a mandatory place that I would attend after high school. My early images of college included the television show from the late 1980’s “A Different World.” In my mind, college was four years away from home with lots of work and lots of social time. I carried those beliefs all the way until my first day at the University of Illinois, Chicago, when the reality hit. Nonetheless, I worked hard and graduated in four years with a set plan.

As counselors, in many schools, students look to us as being great advisors on postsecondary education. For a number of my students, I am one of the few people in their lives who has earned a college degree. Sometimes, I wonder if that could be the reason behind students having apprehension over attending college if it could be because of not seeing enough images or hearing enough college experiences. As an advisor, I want to explore the mindsets around college as a way of opening the dialogue to discuss options. Without the exploration conversation, I think students may feel or even get annoyed when adults in school try to engage them in planning. As counselors, the role is to bring to light opportunities offered in a non-judgmental tone, not necessarily to change beliefs or go overboard to prove a point.

Social-Emotional factors impacts choice:

In your practice, what social-emotional factors have you seen with your students? Is there a commonality? Do some of these factors stem from home, community, peer relationships, school climate? Depending on the student, it can range from all and then some to somewhat, but minimal. It is important to acknowledge that there are students who are dealing with serious issues impacting their lives. We as counselors are important professionals who can work and show some support with these students by guiding them to manage the factors within their control and move forward from the factors outside their control.

I remember a family of siblings who lost both parents within one year. This family was very devastated to the point that it broke my heart seeing the pain of loss in their eyes. It was a process to help this family come to the point in which dialogue on post-secondary became attainable. After numerous resources, staff and family support, these siblings have attained colleges degrees and work full time.

I would like to point out that not all factors that students face in the final years of grade school are traumatic. I have worked with students with factors that carry a positive or neutral tone to a student's decision making. Sometimes I talk with students at multiple grade levels so that there is ease of reception on post-secondary explorations with students.

What can I do now to reach my goals?:

As I have gained knowledge and exposure over the years about different op-

portunities during my practice, if I was aware of job programs that also pay for college tuition, two year programs that could get me certified in a skill in addition to the offer of transferring to a four year institution earning a degree, or a program that helped me in networking with companies to get better job offers, I most likely would have taken advantage of them. I am sure that some who are reading this article may think the same thing.



Once exploring beliefs and addressing socio-emotional have been brought to the surface with a student, let us begin the fun part...planning. Plans are custom made and not one size fits all. The academic profile comprising of grades, grade point averages and test scores though varied amongst school populations, should lend itself as a guide when having exploratory conversations with students. The conversations you have with students who have 3.30+ grade point averages sending applications to selective colleges/universities will not be the same as conversations with students who have 1.20+ grade point averages. However, we do need to spend time with all students. My desire for my

student with a 1.00-ish grade point average will be able to zestfully identify an attainable, concrete post-secondary plan just as much as the student who has earned a high g.p.a./test scores which may include a gap year program, attending a community college, working full time with a company that will extend the offer to pay for college courses, or certificate/trade institutions.

In my practice, students who have lower academic profiles are surprised when I describe to them the possibilities of earning trade certificates and degrees. Some of the students I have worked with in similar profiles have often stated to me that, "I just want to get out of high school and work. College ain't for me." For those that do believe that a job is a necessity, my dialogue has centered around steps to do both classes and work. This has been not only more encouraging, but also a relief.

I am elated to see that multiple post-secondary options are recognized as viable and attainable. I believe that students from various walks of life will feel that inclusive with the knowledge, tools, and education of such options. In time, it will ease the post-secondary process for students facing much apprehension and will even motivate those who may not have seen it as a possibility for their future. I will continue to believe that all students can and are capable of successful post-secondary planning when given the education options.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Allen-Moore, LPC
Master Counselor, CPS
Thomas Kelly High School
Chicago, Illinois

A Day on the Hill



Applying for RAMP?

Applying for RAMP in October 2017? The application is now open. Also, make sure to check out the modified rubric, which provides comprehensive details on each of the 12 components. Need more help applying? Check out the wealth of RAMP resources available online.



SUBMIT

2018 Conference Session Proposals

Interested in presenting at the 2018 ASCA Annual Conference, July 14–17, 2018, in Los Angeles? Submit proposals online by Sept. 4, 2017, at 4 p.m. Eastern. Want more information on how to write a proposal? Watch a webinar on what makes a successful conference session proposal to learn more. Go to www.schoolcounselor.org



Spotlight

School Counselors:

...REACH HIGHER

- ...stay ahead of the curve in the field of school counseling
- ...are the best cheerleaders and celebrate their students' accomplishments
- ...see their students through the Summer Melt and even take them to college and help them settle in!

Being a school counselor gives me such joy, although it's a challenging role that is dynamic, fast-paced and requires you to wear so many hats. Interestingly enough, that's what I really love about the role. No two days are exactly alike. I can shepherd, advocate and support students in countless ways. It's like being a gardener who is charged with watering and nurturing the precious flowers and witnessing them grow into such beautiful flowers. I would also consider our role as shepherds protecting and guiding them towards their respective paths in life. I'm able to work with our students at such a dynamic phase in their development and help them face the turbulence and rocky roads while they plan for their futures.

Despite the many challenges in our profession on a national, state and local level, I am compelled to remain steadfast on behalf of our students because they are our future and they deserve our very best, despite the politics, budgeting woes, crime and violence. Rather, that's an even more critical reason to show up for our young people. Sometimes, we are the only ones who are there to be an encouraging voice, a supportive shoulder, or a reason to dream again. I count it an honor to be able to believe in them and their endless possibilities of their future until they can believe it for themselves! So thankful to be a school counselor who supports the dreams and goals of my students each and every day!

- Stephanie Harris, Chicago Public Schools "Master Counselor" at Austin College and Career Academy (sjharris@cps.edu)

Professional school counselors are indispensable, collaborative, stakeholders promoting holistic student achievement from academic attainment, to postsecondary readiness, to positive student

character development. The tenets of professional school counseling services are dynamically distinguishable in our schools. Our school counselors are not only evidence based in practice, producing measurable results in student achievement, but are also cross-functional, nurturing an equitable school culture that is mission-based. We embody the school climate on principles of integrity, fostering ethics, trust, and respect in bringing together all stakeholders to work toward a common goal. In committing to and implementing ISBE's mission of advocating for policies that enhance education, empower districts, and ensure equitable outcomes for all students, school counselors understand and implement ongoing strategic plans to address the needs of all our students.

Every day as a school counselor is an adventure. I am faced with challenges of fast-paced and demanding needs requiring quick turn-around interventions, especially in supporting heart-wrenching predicaments of our students and their families, but the greatest gratification is observing the impact of believing in and helping students to be the best version of themselves and empowering them with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to overcome barriers and adversities.

[#IamCPS](#)

- Abba Ayesh, Chicago Public Schools "Master Counselor" at Farragut Career Academy IB World School (aaayesh@cps.edu)



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