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January/February Web Exclusives
Listen to a podcast on “Youth in Foster Care” about how school counselors can support these students.

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Seeing the full spectrum.

Addressing autism throughout the chain of life.

Over the next decade, nearly half a million people with autism will enter adulthood in the United States. Drexel University's Dr. Paul Shattuck knows the nation's support systems aren't prepared for this.

While most autism research focuses on the very young, the A.J. Drexel Autism Institute is the first research center in the world that focuses on how society can take action—across organizations and within communities—to improve outcomes across people's lifespans.

Through Shattuck’s Life Course Outcomes Program, we’ll be able to finally gather and explore population-level data and create knowledge about what kinds of programs and policies actually enhance total quality of life.
Four years ago, my wife, Beverly, started teaching middle school AVID. Since then, she’s been sounding more like a school counselor, helping students develop college and career readiness, organizational skills and social skills. She finds the work extremely gratifying. And we’ve developed a stronger appreciation for the fact that we’ve been able to provide our children with educational support that many students, particularly immigrants, don’t have. Support that I certainly didn’t have as a child.

My family came to America with very little except the hope for a better life and the determination to achieve it. My parents sacrificed tremendously to ensure their children wouldn’t need to make the same sacrifices. Because my parents couldn’t speak English, my father couldn’t do the same type of work he did in China. My mother couldn’t work at all. My parents sacrificed tremendous financial resources or parental support my children didn’t have. They deserve the chance to succeed. This disparity is even more pronounced among public school students. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates approximately 44.6 percent of U.S. students live in poverty, as determined by the number of students who receive free or reduced meals. Although African-American and Hispanic students represent 38 percent of the total student population, they account for 79 percent of the students in high-poverty schools.

Like most immigrant families and those living in poverty, my family didn’t want handouts. We didn’t expect a home or an education or a job just because of our social and economic status. We just wanted a chance to succeed like everyone else. My siblings and I knew education would give us that chance. All of us were made college and career ready through public schools.

At the White House College Opportunity Day of Action in December, Vice President Biden recalled standing with his wife, President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the Democratic National Convention in 2012. Mrs. Obama looked at the four of them and remarked that none of them would be there if they hadn’t received some help along the way.

I certainly received help. College would have been impossible for us if my siblings and I hadn’t received government grants and loans. Fortunately, my children didn’t need government support. However, millions of students don’t have the financial resources or parental support my children have. They deserve the chance to succeed.
The exception to the rule is the norm.

Freedom and Responsibility
At Marlboro College, students work closely with dedicated faculty to map out an individualized course of study, based on their intellectual passions. By taking ownership of their academic exploration, Marlboro students learn how to define far-reaching goals, and meet them.
LEGAL
ETHICAL

STUDENTS IN NEED AND THE COURTS
BY CAROLYN STONE, ED.D.

Undocumented K-12 Children
As you walked past the front office this morning you overheard a staff member explaining to a parent that without a Social Security number she is unable to enroll her children in your school. You strongly suspect this family is undocumented and will leave and never come back. Is there anything you can do? Is your school district within its legal rights to deny entry to students if the parents don’t have Social Security numbers?

The 1982 U.S. Supreme Court landmark case Plyler vs. Doe gave undocumented K-12 students the right to a public education. In the last decade, states and municipalities have passed laws targeting undocumented students; however, when it comes to K-12 education, states and municipalities cannot ignore the Supreme Court’s ruling in Plyler.

Plyler began in 1975 when a Texas state law allowed public school districts to charge tuition for undocumented school children. Texas school superintendent James Plyler began charging $1,000 per undocumented student. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) filed suit on behalf of four families. A U.S. district judge found both the state law and Plyler’s policy unconstitutional, holding that they violated the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit affirmed the decision. The Plyler case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which, in 1982, voided the Texas statute in a 5-4 decision saying it violated the equal-protection clause.

Justice William Brennan, writing for the majority, characterized this situation as one “imposing special disabilities upon groups disfavored by virtue of circumstances beyond their control... a kind of ‘class or caste’ treatment that the 14th Amendment was designed to abolish.”

In 1996, Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.) introduced legislation that would have allowed states to do what Texas had attempted to do in 1975, but the Gallegly Amendment did not appeal to lawmakers or educators. Educators had come to believe that Plyler was good for the country, and educating undocumented children was for the benefit of all Americans.

In the last decade school district policies and practices have threatened Plyler, such as requiring Social Security numbers or a driver’s license before parents can enroll their children in school. In 2007, on the 25th anniversary of the Plyler decision, retired superintendent James Plyler said, “It would have been one of the worst things to happen in education. Right after we let those youngsters in, I was pleased.”

Undocumented postsecondary students
The postsecondary battles on in-state tuition have reprised Plyler at the university level. Undocumented students are paying the same tuition as international students at many institutions. Currently, 18 states allow undocumented college students to establish residency to pay in-state tuition: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York,
AT UTI, WE’RE FOR SUCCESS

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*Approximately 9,960 of the 10,600 UTI graduates in 2013 were available for employment. At the time of reporting, approximately 9,720 were employed within one year of their graduation date, for a total of 98%. UTI cannot guarantee employment or salary. For information about our graduation rates, the median debts of students who completed the program and other important information, visit our website at www.uti.edu/disclosure.com.
new laws affecting the school when they are funneled down from the district. It is also helpful to stay abreast of changes through professional readings.

**Homeless Students**

You have a student enrolling in your school who is unaccompanied by an adult and without any of the paperwork normally required. You strongly suspect this student is homeless, and he confirms this after a private conversation with you. The front office staff refuses to admit him. Do you keep his homelessness confidential? Is the front office staff within its rights by refusing to admit him into the school?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is federal legislation that protects the right of homeless children and youth to enroll and remain in school while they or their families are homeless. School stability, access and support are at the heart of the law for homeless students. The act’s definition is broad: “Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including, but not limited to:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.
- Migratory children living in the above circumstances”

The law does not specify an age range and is only restricted by the age limit set by individual states for secondary enrollment.

The law supports keeping children in their school of origin, which is the school they were attending when they became homeless, and students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin. Enrollment should not be hindered by lack of medical/health records, proof of residency, educational records or even

**Foster Kids**

A child welfare agency caseworker is at your school asking for copies of a withdrawn student’s educational records so this child, who is in foster care, can enter his new school placed in the right courses. The principal has asked you to handle the situation, but you do not know the FERPA law about caseworkers and foster children. What do you do?

In January 2013, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was amended by the Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA) to allow for better information sharing between child welfare and education. Child welfare agencies were experiencing long delays in accessing records. This act amended FERPA to permit schools to disclose a student’s education records, without parental consent, to a representative of a state or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who has the right to access a student’s case plan (as defined and determined by the state or tribal organization), is engaged in addressing the student’s education needs, and is authorized by the agency or organization to receive such records, when such agency or organization is legally responsible (in accordance with state or tribal law), for the care and protection of the student. These changes to FERPA also had an impact on the confidentiality provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). USA allows agencies that are legally responsible for foster children to have access to specific information for early intervention or educational services.

When changes are made to FERPA, school counselors are often the last to be informed by administration, yet often are called on to apply FERPA. In an April 2013 survey sent to ASCA members, only 8 percent of the ASCA members responding indicated that their school district had informed them about USA. Best practice is to let your principal know that you want to be apprised of

Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah and Washington. Undocumented students are ineligible for most state aid and federal financial assistance. The postsecondary issues will be the next iteration of Plyler. The tenets of the failed DREAM Act have already resurfaced and will continue to do so as undocumented children become increasingly accepted in this country.
immunization records. If a child moves districts he/she can still stay in the district of origin for the duration of homelessness or until the end of the school year.

The McKinney-Vento Act also requires a liaison for every school district to ensure the law is adhered to so homeless children receive an equitable education. The liaison helps parents obtain the necessary paperwork but also addresses any barriers to enrollment and settles any disputes according to the law. There is a legal imperative for reporting homeless youth to the liaison officer in the McKinney-Vento Act:

(A) Duties: Each local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), shall ensure that –

(i) homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies. (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001).

FERPA specifically allows the sharing of information with other school officials within the district or school who have legitimate educational interests. The homeless liaison officers have legitimate educational interest; to do their jobs as directed by the federal government they have to know who the homeless children are in their district. Additionally, school districts are legally required by the U.S. Department of Education to gather and report data on the number of homeless students in the district. To avoid duplication, the information collected must be personally identifiable and the nighttime residence given if known.

The legally required breaching of trust for a vulnerable student who requests confidentiality leaves school counselors uncomfortable. Student might be deeply embarrassed by their plight, wary of social services or afraid they will be separated from their parents. There are many reasons why students might want confidentiality. The school counseling profession recognizes children’s need for privacy and a trusting adult to whom they can share their confidences. This situation tests school counselors’ ethics. However, the law supersedes ethics, and personally identifiable information must be provided to the homeless liaison officer. The skilled school counselor will help students understand why the breach is necessary and will provide students with as much autonomy as possible, such as asking them if they would like to provide the liaison officer with the information themselves. School counselors want to wrap these children in protective warmth, and homeless liaisons want to support and get them services and back into decent homes. Collaborative work benefits these children, who may already feel disempowered, fragmented and scared.

Carolyn Stone, Ed.D., is chair of ASCA’s Ethics Committee and a professor at the University of North Florida. She can be reached at cstone@unf.edu.

Who says wisdom has to be conventional?

At Keene State College, students challenge assumptions as they learn to change the world.
Creating a comprehensive school counseling program can be a challenging experience under the best of circumstances. When your school population encompasses the homeless to the über-wealthy, however, you’ve added a layer of complexity that can seem daunting.

How can school counselors work with both affluent and impoverished students in the same school? What are the challenges of having two such different populations?

“It’s recognizing our students come from a variety of places,” said Kevin McMahon, director of student services at West Potomac High School in Alexandria, Va. “We’re focused on creating a positive culture for all of our students.”

Those who’ve successfully created that positive culture say it requires treating all student issues as worthy of attention, while remaining flexible to the widely varying needs of a diverse student population.
In Wake County, N.C., Brent Sauls, dean of student services at Broughton High School, works with a student population that ranges from recent refugees living in lower socio-economic nodes of the city to the “old money” families that have been entrenched in the Raleigh area for generations.

“We pretty much run the gamut here at Broughton,” Sauls said. “We’re an inner-city school, very diverse in many ways. You have families that can afford to live in country-club type communities, and then you have inner-city kids and refugees all in the same school population.”

The school’s Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) school counseling program includes six school counselors serving approximately 2,100 high school students. About 38 percent of Broughton students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

A significant challenge in working with students from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds is making sure all students are served, no matter what their need might be, Sauls said. “The challenge is making them both feel like their problems are, maybe not equal, but worth hearing. We have to make them both feel cared for.”

For example, one student who walks in the door may be dealing with living out of a car or a homeless shelter, and then the next student who walks in is concerned about getting into a prestigious university.

Although a school counselor might be tempted to say to a wealthier student, “At least you’re not dealing with what you’re going to eat tonight,” Sauls says it’s important to remember that wealthier families have valid concerns as well, and it’s the school counselor’s job to address those issues.

“The assumption is that wealthy students don’t have problems that affect academics, but they do. You have other challenges, other problems that cross socio-economic boundaries, from substance abuse to broken homes, to whatever it might be that’s affecting the student.

“I think that’s a challenge for us. How can we make sure that we care for both sides of the spectrum? Whether their problem is trying to find their next meal or trying to get afterschool help, we’re going to be there to help them.”

Another challenge of having poor and wealthy students in the same school is encouraging student interaction among peer groups. “It’s about having a sense of belonging and meeting people who are different from you,” Saul said.

Schoolwide, service-oriented projects at Broughton, such as packaging meals for the needy in third-world countries, encourage all students to work together toward a common task. “Service-based learning is a big thing here,” Sauls said.

Sauls also finds that students who get involved in school activities such as band or sports are more likely to socialize with students from varying economic backgrounds. “If they plug into something, that’s where you start to see students interacting. When you don’t, that’s when they tend to fall into their socio-economic groups.”

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Affluence Meets ESOL

Although Sauls enjoys the chance to work with students from both ends of the financial spectrum, Nellie Hauchman, school counselor at Carl Sandburg Middle School, Alexandria, Va., finds that focusing on the less-affluent English-as-a-second-language population helps her to be more effective at her school.

“It’s an incredibly exciting population, but it’s an incredibly needy population,” Hauchman said. “It’s a long way from trying to get your kids into honors classes.”

Located in Fairfax County, Carl Sandburg is near wealthy communities just outside of Washington, D.C., along the Potomac River. Although many of the students fall into upper-income brackets, nearly 50 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch. “It’s quite diverse as far as socio-economic status and also as multicultural. It’s a good basket of everything,” Hauchman said.

Hauchman is one of five school counselors who work with approximately 1,400 seventh- and eighth-grade students. Prior to this school year, caseloads were assigned strictly by alphabet. As the only Spanish-speaking school counselor at Carl Sandburg, Hauchman saw an opportunity to streamline her counseling efforts by focusing on those students and families learning English. She became the designated ESOL counselor in fall 2014.

Now, her caseload consists of about 300 students, ranging from those who speak little or no English to those who speak enough to be in the general education population. Even with those in the higher fluency levels, Hauchman says there’s a good chance the family does not speak English.

Although Hauchman does see students from Arabic and African countries, the biggest percentage of the school’s ESOL students come from Spanish-speaking countries such as Guatemala and Honduras.

Many of Hauchman’s students have living arrangements that are precarious at best, which introduces an additional layer of stress to their lives. “Most of these kids may wonder from one day to the next or one week to the next if they’re going to be in the same place,” Hauchman said.

Students arriving from other countries face hardships other than just poverty. Many suffer from a range of emotional and mental issues such as separation anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder and trust issues. Some have been separated for years from their parents. “Their mental health needs are quite significant,” Hauchman said. “And so, making them academically open seems a big leap.”

With so many socio-economic pressures on her students, Hauchman teaches them how to set aside those concerns, at least temporarily, so they can concentrate on their schoolwork. “You have to compartmentalize,” Hauchman tells them. She speaks openly with students, acknowledging that their lives are difficult, yet continuously talking to them.
about possibilities and creating hope. For Hauchman, it’s “creating a future in their heads separate from what is currently their life.”

Hauchman acknowledges the challenges of helping students with such complex needs. “It’s a multi-layered approach in dealing with this population,” Hauchman said. When families are new to this country, explaining even the basics of the American educational system becomes paramount. “It’s not just about getting A’s and B’s,” Hauchman said. “Most of my parents are just finding out what A’s and B’s represent.”

Hauchman relies on evening programs such as Parents as Education Partners to teach English skills and help parents understand and maneuver the school system: how to work with teachers, how to communicate with administrators and how to read a report card.

Recently, her school started a reunification program for the families that have been separated.

With county budget cuts, Hauchman looks to extend her circle of resources so she can continue supporting this student population. “I’m trying very hard to navigate and collaborate with outside resources,” Hauchman said.

Despite the additional expenses associated with serving a poor population, Hauchman stresses the value of educating the poor along with the rich. “My work with the kids is what I’m about. It is a global community of children that we can educate for the global world. Educated people do get a better chance at making this world a better place.”

**Meet Them Where They Are**

Like Carl Sandberg, its feeder middle school, West Potomac High School in Alexandria, Va., has a diverse student population from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. McMahon embraces the diversity and says it strengthens the school.

“The interaction and diverse student population that we have, that’s one of the best characteristics of West Potomac,” McMahon said.

West Potomac has nine school counselors serving more than 2,400 students, about 42 percent of whom are eligible for free and reduced lunch. “We’re a sizable department working together to everything we can to support our students,” McMahon said.

McMahon finds that a successful school counseling program is about meeting students where they are and helping them achieve their goals, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. As a large school, West Potomac has multiple ways to support students facing a variety of challenges, including college success programs and individual support as needed.

The key, McMahon said, especially in a large, diverse school, is channeling students to the resources that will be the most beneficial. That requires really getting to know students and understanding the challenges individual students face.
“Is it a socio-economic challenge of continuing their education after high school? Or, is it more of a basic need such as school supplies and a winter jacket? If there are challenges outside the school, there’s no doubt that’s going to impact them being successful here at the school,” McMahon said.

School counselors at West Potomac focus on understanding the perspectives of both students and families, and they work collaboratively with school social workers and school psychologists to coordinate meeting the needs of the school’s diverse population. Building relationships with families enables school counselors to know exactly where the students are coming from – and how the school counseling program can best help.

He points to their growing Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program as an example of meeting students where they are. As a college-readiness resource for under-represented students, the program helps put college within reach. “When I step into an AVID class, I know that life after high school is a priority for all the students in the room. And that’s a great way for them to work together with peers to reach their end goals.”

**Nurturing Respect Early On**

For Robin Zorn, 2014 School Counselor of the Year and a school counselor at Mason Elementary School in Duluth, Ga., creating acceptance and unity in an economically diverse student population starts at a young age.

Zorn finds that instilling a culture of kindness and respect goes a long way in helping children develop empathy for others. “We try to create that positive environment where students and teachers are always respectful. Schools have to be proactive with that.”

Although 45 percent of Mason Elementary School students qualify for free and reduced lunch, the county is also home to luxurious gated communities, including the prestigious Sugarloaf Country Club. In working with such a diverse population, Zorn looks for ways the school counseling program can advocate for all students, regardless of economic differences.

“Sometimes with the low socio-economic students, we don’t always have the support at home,” Zorn said. “They’re doing the very best that they can by getting...
food on the table. So, what can we do to help support them? What can we do at school to take a lot of that pressure off the parents?”

Wealthy families can also display a lack of support at home, Zorn said. “I see the high socio-economic kids talk about how their parents are too busy.” She recently had to convince wealthy parents about the need for a tutor when their son was failing.

Conversely, many parents from high socio-economic families have the flexibility to volunteer in the classroom, which helps all of the students. “We have a lot of the moms who don’t work outside of the home, so they can volunteer, and they take on a lot of PTA responsibilities. It’s wonderful, and we’re so thankful for them,”

Zorn said that poor students often suffer from a lack of hope and optimism. When they see the struggles their parents go through, it’s natural for them to want to just give up. She counteracts that negativity by always encouraging the kids and assuring them that they are valued and can learn. “You’ve got to really connect with them,” Zorn said. “If students feel connected and valued and that you believe in them, they will work for you.”

She uses the “it’s just different” approach when teaching students about diversity. “One thing I do with the school counseling program is really focus on that diversity and how special and unique we all are.” She emphasizes that differences are not good or bad. “It’s just different. I like chocolate ice cream, but you might like vanilla ice cream.”

Her diversity lessons include developing character, compassion and empathy, along with feelings and humility. She uses “diversity” jellybeans, gift bags and other games to illustrate her point that you can’t judge a book by its cover.

Although the jellybeans look like they’ll be one flavor, they are actually a different flavor, which surprises the students. “It’s yellow, and you think it’s lemon, but when you taste it, it might be licorice.” The brightly decorated gift bag that the students invariably choose holds a boring prize like a pencil or silverware, whereas the plain gift bag they didn’t choose holds a really cool prize such as a bag of candy. Then they play a game similar to musical chairs where students find out things they have in common with other students.

What really counts, Zorn tells her students, is the kind of person you are. “We talk a lot about that,” Zorn said. “It doesn’t matter if one person comes from this background or that background or looks this way or looks that way. It doesn’t matter. I really focus in on the content of your character. Are you nice? Are you kind? It doesn’t matter where we come from.”

Sandra Conrad is a freelance writer who last wrote for ASCA School Counselor about Robin Zorn, the 2014 School Counselor of the Year.

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In my first year as a school counselor, I had a student on my caseload I’ll call Elliot. He was a bright, kind student but was withdrawn socially, behind academically and older than his peers. I had a difficult time getting in touch with his guardians because the phone number listed was disconnected. A group of teachers and I continually reached out to Elliot and eventually gained his trust,
at which point we learned he had been living in and out of shelters for the past six months. Elliot was considered homeless and had been transferring between different schools for years. Because of his inconsistent schooling, his records rarely came with him, and he was often overlooked when entering new schools.

Elliot’s case is not uncommon across school systems in the United States. Urban, rural and suburban schools all have students experiencing homelessness. In fact, the number of students experiencing homelessness enrolling in schools across the country has gradually increased over the past few years according to the National Center for Homelessness Education. These increasing numbers are concerning due to the challenges homelessness poses for students.

Children experiencing homelessness often have a difficult time keeping up academically with their peers but also socially. Since families experiencing homelessness tend to move frequently, the inconsistency in students’ classes and the inability to maintain relationships with classmates or teachers and school staff makes it difficult to be successful in school. School counselors are vital in supporting these students and ensuring they get the services needed to do well in school.

Which Students are Homeless?
The first step to supporting students experiencing homelessness is identification. Defining homelessness and identifying students as homeless can be complicated. On a basic level, being “homeless” means lacking consistent housing. To help clarify which students are considered homeless, the federal definition, under Section 725 ((2)(B)(i-iv)) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines “homeless children and youths” as follows:

(i) Children and youths sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; living in emergency or transitional shelters; abandoned in hospitals; or awaiting foster care placement;

(ii) Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

(iii) Children and youths who are living in cars, park, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; and

(iv) Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above.

Despite the McKinney-Vento definitions, there are still gray areas in which students or families may not know they are considered homeless or prefer to not be identified. The stigma behind being homeless and the mistrust of educational officials may lead families and students to hesitate in identifying themselves.

Identification is important so students experiencing homelessness may receive the additional support afforded to them under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Under McKinney-Vento, schools are required to determine whether there is anything hindering the enrollment, attendance and success of students experiencing homelessness. In a nutshell, under McKinney-Vento, schools can apply for grants to fund programs to support students experiencing homelessness. It also requires that students experiencing homelessness be immediately enrolled in school regardless of missing records such as transcripts or immunizations and that they are provided transportation. Additionally, each school is required to assign a homeless liaison to ensure students experiencing homelessness are identified, do not face barriers to their education and have transportation to their school of origin. The liaison also notifies families of opportunities and their rights and the services available to them.

To illustrate the benefits of the McKinney-Vento Act, here are two fictitious examples commonly seen in schools:

• Brian, a seventh-grade student at Middle School A, becomes homeless in the middle of the school year. During this time, his family temporarily moves in with friends outside of his school zone. Under McKinney-Vento, because he is identified as homeless, Brian is afforded the right to transportation to the school of origin during that school year.

• Susan, a ninth-grade student, attempts to enroll as a transfer student at High School B but does not have complete academic records or immunization forms required for enrollment. After discovering she currently resides in a shelter and is considered homeless, she is allowed to enroll in the school immediately without the required paperwork.

These examples demonstrate how the McKinney-Vento Act can provide consistency in students’ education. The modified transportation and enrollment requirements allow students to maintain regular attendance and not experience extended gaps in their education.

School Counselors’ Role
School counselors have vital roles in supporting the development of students
also give students a chance to process their struggles, as well as have a supportive adult they can talk to about their concerns. You may need to step beyond traditional counseling approaches and include more interactive techniques, such as play therapy, art therapy or bibliotherapy. In addition to individual counseling, including students in small groups and conducting classroom lessons on topics such as acceptance, conflict resolution, stress management and friendships may help students acquire skills necessary for their social/emotional development.

Other interventions to address students’ social/emotional needs may include developing mentorship programs and ensuring a safe school environment. This may involve pairing students in need with compassionate older students or bringing

### For More Information

Serving students experiencing homelessness requires school counselors to have knowledge of the McKinney-Vento Act and the unique issues that accompany homelessness. There are many great resources available to enhance your knowledge and understanding. Below are just a few of the most helpful resources:

- **Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

- **Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness**
  [www.icphusa.org](http://www.icphusa.org)

- **National Alliance to End Homelessness**
  [www.naeh.org](http://www.naeh.org)

- **National Center on Family Homelessness**
  [www.familyhomelessness.org](http://www.familyhomelessness.org)

- **National Center for Homeless Education (SERVE Center)**

- **National Coalition for the Homeless**
  [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)

- **National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth**
  [www.naehcy.org](http://www.naehcy.org)
in respected community members as mentors. Also monitor students’ relationships with peers and ensure that students experiencing homelessness feel safe in the school setting and are not bullied or harassed. This will require you to regularly check-in with students about their relationships.

The social/emotional challenges students experiencing homelessness face may lead to mental health concerns that require more intensive treatment and therapy. In these cases, call upon outside community resources to provide the necessary services. Prior to doing so, ensure transportation is available and that services are provided at little to no costs. When possible, bringing mental health services into the school is the optimal solution.

Career domain: Career and college planning may often be overlooked for students experiencing homelessness. Students may assume they cannot afford college or their basic needs may overshadow the importance of career counseling. That being said, college and career counseling becomes more important than ever for this group of students. This process begins as early as elementary school and continues beyond high school graduation. By starting early and ensuring students experiencing homelessness see college as a possibility, they will be more mentally prepared when they enter high school.

When students are ready to start making post-graduation plans, make sure they know all of their options. Students experiencing homelessness can get funding for college application and test fees. Additionally, students may need assistance filling out FAFSA forms and should be aware that they can indicate their homeless status on the form. They can also apply for scholarships. One such example is the LeTendre Fund for Homeless Children through the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

The social/emotional challenges students experiencing homelessness face may lead to mental health concerns that require more intensive treatment and therapy.

Help Your Students Calculate the Cost of College

JA Build Your Future™ is a free app developed by Junior Achievement and PwC that helps teens, their parents, school counselors, and teachers break down the cost of achieving young people’s goals into real, usable numbers.

JA Build Your Future helps teens explore potential future income from a desired career and assess the cost of post-secondary education to help them make more informed decisions about their futures and avoid assuming too much college debt.

Download JA Build Your Future from Google Play or the Apple App Store.
School counselors conducting college and career counseling with students experiencing homelessness must help them to identify post-graduation paths where they can succeed. Getting into college is only the start. Students must also have the resources and skills to be successful. For instance, some students may be interested in community college, but if they do not have consistent housing, they may be forced to drop out. For students attending four-year universities, they’ll need to know if the university provides housing during breaks and over the summer. School counselors should help students experiencing homelessness navigate these challenges and identify colleges that fit their needs.

Although individual, group and classroom interventions are critical, including broader approaches to remove barriers and collaborating with other stakeholders will ensure a strong system of support for students experiencing homelessness. As advocates, school counselors should train staff on the McKinney-Vento policies and help them to recognize the signs of homelessness. Further, school counselors should work with the school and district to ensure that policies such as attendance or discipline do not hinder the academic success of students experiencing homelessness.

Collaboration starts with building partnerships in the school with vital partners such as social workers, school psychologists, special educators, homeless liaisons, teachers, nurses and administrators. In the community, school counselors can collaborate with faith-based organizations, businesses, housing programs and shelters. You may also want to ask the local community for donations for school supplies, food or clothing. By facilitating regular meetings with all stakeholders and having clear expectations for each other’s roles, school counselors can facilitate a system of care where students are supported in the school and in the community.

Stacey Gaenzle Havlik, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Villanova University. She can be reached at stacey.havlik@villanova.edu.

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A NETWORK FOR NEWCOMERS
Social media can be a great way for refugee and immigrant students to connect with each other, stay in touch with old friends and make new ones.

BY LUCY LEWIS PURGASON, PH.D., NCC, ACS, LSC, AND JOSÉ VILLALBA, PH.D.

Thinking back to your own teen years may bring a mix of nostalgia and nausea. Remember how crushed you were when you discovered your friends didn’t have the same lunch period as you? Remember how challenging just walking through the hallways could be if you weren’t part of the in crowd? The social interactions that happen in the lunchroom, the hallways or at the Friday football game in many ways define the adolescent experience and serve as a map of the social hierarchies within school. Developmental theorists have highlighted that the establishment of friendships is one of the most significant tasks during this period of life.

Now, imagine for a moment what it would be like to navigate these spaces
Technology Resources

It is important to remember that our students do not all have the same access to technology. To address the gaps in technology access, some schools offer after-school or weekend access to computer labs or provide opportunities for students to check out iPads or laptops over the weekend. Below are some technology resources that may be helpful for newcomer students and families when working on school projects, practicing English or connecting with family living around the world:

EDUCATIONAL
- Edudaris: an interactive, educational community for students to network about college and career planning
- WordBookXL English Dictionary and Thesaurus for iPad: a dictionary app that also includes pronunciation for each word
- Lingua.ly: a Google Chrome extension that can be used when reading information on the Internet. Once installed when you double click a word a pronunciation and definition are provided, and it stores the words so that flashcards can be created.

COMMUNICATION
- ooVoo (www.ovoo.com): a free videocall and instant messaging app that can be used with Facebook.
- Skype (www.skype.com): a free account that can be used for individual or group voice and video calls

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING
- DuoLingo (www.duulingo.com): a free language learning app with fun and interactive lessons
- LiveMocha.com (www.livemocha.com): a free language learning website that includes access to practice with native speakers

when every face that you see belongs to that of a stranger, or the voices you hear are not in the language you grew up speaking. Imagine if you didn’t know any of the unwritten codes and social cues that define high school life.

This is the experience many newly arrived immigrant and refugee students face when they transition to life in the United States. As the numbers of immigrant and refugee families continues to rise, so does the realization for students and educators alike that establishing a school “community” that values the strengths of all members is more nuanced and complex than ever.

Students raised in the United States have an opportunity to establish strong social networks through school, extracurricular activities and family ties. Newcomer immigrant and refugee students, however, are often challenged to navigate the routine struggles of adolescence in the United States without the added benefit of a group of peers that they have known for a long time. In fact, many newcomer students have been separated, often abruptly, from close friends and family members who remain in their home country or in refugee camps. Distanced from their support systems and sometimes arriving in the United States without one or both parents, newcomer students often experience feelings of depression, anxiety and loneliness.

Friendships are important for adolescents, not only for help in coping with the myriad emotional challenges of high school life but also with the support provided in navigating the academic experiences of high school such as: registering for the SATs, applying to colleges or considering postsecondary options, helping with homework or completing financial aid applications. In addition to these stressors, many newcomer adolescents also face potential barriers such as: adjusting to a new school and culture, learning to speak English, helping with family finances and fearing deportation. Newcomer students often prefer to get help from friends when dealing with these acculturation stressors; however, newcomer youth often have difficulty forming friendships at school and are likely to feel isolated within the school environment.

Face-to-Face Connections

In a desire for connection, newcomer students may turn to social media, particularly as a tool for keeping in touch with old friends, alleviating homesickness and relating around culture. Adolescents are using sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr, to instantly tap into what their friends – around the block and around the world – are doing, as well as to establish connections and community with individuals outside of their immediate social circle around similar interests or commonalities.

During my time as a school counselor, I learned from newcomer students about the role social media played in their lives both prior to and upon arrival in the United States. Overwhelmingly, students spoke about how Facebook helped them maintain relationships with friends back in their home country or in refugee camps. Facebook also served as a way to connect with new friends, especially friends sharing the same ethnicity or cultural background. For example, one student from a Southeast Asian country talked about a Facebook group that started primarily for individuals from her home city who had relocated to the United States. Through this Facebook group she was able to talk with peers who shared similar transition experiences. Newcomer students are also using Facebook to post pictures and videos, archiving memories of the past and capturing new experiences of life in the United States. For example, one
newcomer student created a Facebook page around his ethnic identity, using it as way to remember life in his home country and share information about current events and political happenings back home.

Social media use may be tied to important benefits for newcomers; however, researchers investigating the outcomes of social media tend to find that it does not replace face-to-face friendships. Furthermore, the extended use of social media may actually have negative impacts on emotional well-being and academics. School counselors can help newcomers intentionally use social media to their advantage while also mitigating some of the consequences associated with its use.

In many ways, school counselors are the social network builders within our schools, interacting with large numbers of students daily through classroom guidance, counseling interventions and other responsive services. This affords us knowledge of our students that can help us build connections between students at school. Outlined below are examples of interventions we can implement to help these newcomer students.

**Responsive Services**

Given our access to and familiarity with data, school counselors can help monitor enrollment trends and note from which countries students are arriving and what languages are spoken. Collaborations with English-as-a-second-language teachers may illuminate specific learning and language needs and assist in establishing mentoring programs between students who have recently arrived and those who have been in the United States for a longer period of time.

Although it can be helpful to match students based on home country or language, you can also partner newcomer students with peer mentors born in the United States who can serve as cultural brokers, providing homework support, in-class assistance or an opportunity to practice English.

Group counseling is another example of an appropriate intervention for newcomer immigrant and refugee students, particularly in facilitating a sharing of pre- and post-arrival experiences in the United States. To this end, connecting with other students may help normalize the transition experience and provide opportunities to interact closely with peers. Although the experiences prior to resettlement vary greatly for students within and across immigrant and refugee groups, commonalities may exist around the multiple transitions experienced, loss of friends and family and stressors encountered upon arrival. Group counseling interventions, therefore, could include a focus on relaxation techniques, stress management strategies and social skills development. Additionally, career counseling interventions are an important need.

Individual counseling may be an important consideration for newcomer students, too. There is an increased likelihood that newcomer students experience some type of trauma prior to arrival in the United States. Narrative and creative arts interventions are important techniques to help students process these experiences. Consider using a strengths-based approach with newcomer students to identify potential areas of interest that could be matched with clubs, sports and other extracurricular activities. If a multicultural club doesn’t already exist at your school, get advice on starting one from racebridgesforschools.com.

Another idea is to partner with ethnic student clubs established at local colleges and universities. College students, who may also be first-generation in the United States, could serve as mentors or co-sponsors for an inaugural high school chapter. Connecting students to these experiences extends social circles available offline and may increase self-confidence.

Newcomer families may have difficulty accessing mental health services due to language and transportation barriers. Here’s another opportunity for you to connect families with community counseling resources to provide school-based counseling interventions. Refugee and immigrant students resettling in rural areas may be distanced from the support of resettlement organizations or separated from a larger ethnic community. School family nights are a way to share information with caregivers and provide an opportunity for families to connect. What resources might be available to assist newcomers in your community?

One school district in a rural area of Washington partnered with a local church and provided transportation and lunches for migrant students attending a summer educational camp housed at the church.

**Individual Planning**

Newcomer students may have specific needs related to academic and career development. For example, immigrant and refugee students may be older than their same-grade peers because of differences in schooling or interrupted schooling in their home country. Therefore, it is important to talk with students about their former educational experiences to develop a complete understanding of the academic curriculum in their home country or in the refugee camps.

Unfortunately, these conversations can often be difficult and even frustrating due to the obstacles in obtaining accurate copies of transcripts or to complete transcript audits because of differences in language, grading scales or course identification, further complicating course placement for students. This may involve working with school district personnel familiar with the student’s native language or collaborating with community-based partners, cultural liaisons and advocates within the community to ensure classes are matched to the student’s appropriate academic level. It may be helpful to have newcomer students identify peers who could offer academic support. For example, newcomer students report using Facebook to create homework groups, practice English, get assistance with assignments and even offer encouragement to continue with schooling.

**School Counseling Core Curriculum**

Newcomer students may be using social media upwards of five-six hours a day. The frequency and openness with which students disclose on Facebook can come at a cost to their privacy and open students up to cyberbullying behaviors. Recent research suggests that the amount of time newcomer students spend on Facebook may actually be taking away from schoolwork or the development of friendships offline, which complicates how school counselors and students find balance between too much dependence on
social media and failing to use an effective tool in the school adjustment process.

In 2012, ASCA and the Internet Keep Safe Coalition (iKeepSafe) published “Facebook for School Counselors,” a guide designed to promote students’ safe use of Facebook. The guide includes suggestions for ways school counselors can become more familiar with Facebook so we are knowledgeable about how to confront and address incidents on Facebook that affect students at school. The following are some questions that may be helpful to ask newcomer students regarding their social media use:

- What are examples of positive and negative experiences you have had on social media?
- How would your life be different if you were not on social media?
- What are your privacy settings?
- How do you decide what to share?
- What would you do if you were threatened or bullied?

Also include information about prosocial media use in classroom guidance lessons, and incorporate it into school policies related to digital citizenship.

Many newcomer students face discrimination and are targeted for harassment at school. Consequently, cyberbullying policies should specifically address bullying related to cultural and racial differences. For a resource on how to address bullying of newcomer students and a toolkit for information on conducting newcomer orientations and developing community partnerships check out the Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s website at www.brycs.org.

All students should feel school is a safe, welcoming environment and experience it as a place where they belong. Friendships are a contributor to a sense of belonging and are related to the successful academic adjustment of newcomer students. Additionally, connection to heritage culture is a protective factor for newcomer students. As advocates, we can work to ensure that the diversity of the student body is reflected within the larger school culture. This may require us to think creatively about ways to build upon our own professional and social networks to create connections for newcomer students and families. The next time you walk the hallways of your building think for a moment of the students who fill those hallways and the diverse backgrounds they represent. If you were a newcomer student, would you see yourself reflected in what you see around you?

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For More Information on Working With Immigrant and Refugee Students

**Center for Health and Health Care in Schools**

*Immigrant and Refugee Children*


**National Association of School Psychologists**

Understanding the plight of immigrant and refugee students www.nasponline.org/publications/cq/39/5/understandingtheplight.aspx

School-based services for traumatized refugee children


**Immigrant Families: Strategies for School Support**

www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/immigrantfamiliesJan10_NASSP.pdf

**Immigrant Teenagers: Helping Them Adjust to Their First Year**

www.nasponline.org/communications/spawareness/immigrantteen.pdf

**UCLA**

Immigrant Children and Youth: Enabling Their Success at School

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pfd/docs/immigrant.pdf

**Department of Education**

Fact Sheet: Educational Services for Immigrant Children and Those Recently Arrived to the U.S.


Fact Sheet II: Additional Questions & Answers on Enrolling New Immigrant Students

AID FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

BY MARY WATERS-BILBO

Rosa recently came to see you about her absences. Despite being an honors student interested in becoming a nurse, Rosa was in danger of losing credit because of mounting absences. Tearfully, she tells you that her mother was recently deported, and when her two-year-old sister is sick, she has to stay home to take care of her. She also is exhausted because she gets up in the middle of the night to comfort her sister when she has recurring nightmares. Rosa readily admits that nothing is more important than her education, but her circumstances as an undocumented student with a deported mother are a barrier to her attending school regularly.

This story illustrates the plight of an undocumented student trying to get an education. President Obama’s executive orders in June 2012 and his recent announcement on Nov. 20, 2014, had a substantial impact on some of these barriers. Let’s take a look at how these presidential actions can address Rosa’s barriers to academic achievement.

The June 12 memorandum, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) provided that undocumented students who arrived in the country before June 15, 2007, could be eligible for a temporary stay from deportation, a work permit and a Social Security card. For students to be eligible, they must have arrived in the United States before age 16, be in school or have graduated from high school or hold a GED degree. Further, they must not have a criminal record, must have lived continuously in the United States and must be younger than 31 years of age. DACA is temporary, and students must reapply every two years. The application fee is $465.

In November 2014, President Obama extended DACA through an executive order, Deferred Action for Parental Accountability. Although at this writing the requirements have not been published, this presidential action is expected to lift the upper age restriction for children and include parents of children who were either born in the United States or whose children are legal resident aliens. These undocumented parents will receive a stay from deportation, protecting them from separation with their children. In addition, these parents will receive a work permit and Social Security number after paying back taxes. Finally, this action will expand DACA for those students who arrived in the United States by January 2010 and before their 16th birthday. Children and parents are not eligible for federal aid, including Pell Grants, food stamps or health insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

Because of a Supreme Court decision, Ply vs. Doe (1982), undocumented students are entitled to a free, public education through high school. Had these executive orders been in place, Rosa’s mother likely would have been protected from deportation since she had a daughter who was an American citizen. Further, under DACA, Rosa would likely receive a work permit and a Social Security card. This would provide her with better job prospects and internship possibilities to gain valuable experience as an aspiring nursing student.

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates 5.2 million undocumented immigrants are eligible for these two programs. To date, only about 580,000 students have received DACA, an estimated half of the eligible population.

So how can you advocate for your undocumented students?

• Be mindful that being undocumented often carries a stigma.
• Become a known advocate. Reach out to religious and community leaders undocumented students and parents may trust.
• Meet with families outside of the school building. Because undocumented families have lived in the shadows, acknowledge the potential mistrust of government institutions, including schools.
• Consider placing the following statement on your door “I am an unafraid educator with and for undocumented students.” This announces you are an ally. Learn more at http://unitedwedream.org/educatorsont.

• Know your state’s policies regarding in-state tuition and state aid for college. Learn which universities offer financial assistance to undocumented students.

• Sponsor a student club for undocumented students. This group can help students feel empowered and become self-advocates, two important psychological traits for undocumented students to cultivate.

• Learn the target language(s) of your undocumented students and families to build trust and credibility.

• Cultivate resources in the community that can provide free legal consultation to your families when applying for DACA and Deferred Action for Parental Accountability. Advise students and families of free DACA clinics, and protect them from unscrupulous legal practices.

• Encourage undocumented students to enroll in AP courses and dual enrollment programs. Although there are financial barriers for undocumented students to attending college, high school students should be encouraged to accumulate college credits.

• Provide hope to your students. These executive orders are only temporary measures that could be repealed under a new administration. Nonetheless, your genuine desire to help students and families will provide much-needed encouragement and support.

Mary Waters, Ed.D., LPC, is an assistant professor at Northeastern State University and president of the Ohio School Counselor Association. She can be reached at watersbi@nsuok.edu.
HELP MIGRANT STUDENTS GROW
Children of migrant workers often struggle to attain the same level of academic achievement as their nonmigrant peers. Migrant families can relocate many times within an academic school year. Regardless of if it’s a single move or a regular occurrence, this uprooting interrupts their education.

Migrant children face many obstacles unique to their lifestyle. Some issues with their frequent moves from school to school—and often from state to state—migrant children can struggle to keep their education on track.

BY TERESA ORTIZ
WWW.SCHOOLCOUNSELOR.ORG
Who Are Migrant Children?
According to the Department of Education, a child is a “migratory child” and is eligible for Migrant Education Program services if all of the following conditions are met:
- The child is not older than 21 years of age
- The child is entitled to a free public education (through grade 12) under state law or is below the age of compulsory school attendance
- The child is a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisher or the child has a parent, spouse or guardian who is a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisher
- The child moved within the preceding 36 months to seek or obtain work or to accompany or join the migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher in order to seek or obtain qualifying work

With regard to the move, the child:
- Has moved from one school district to another or
- In a state with a single school district has moved from one administrative area to another within such district or
- Resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles and migrates a distance of 20 miles or more to a temporary residence to engage in a fishing activity or to accompany or join a parent, spouse or guardian who engages in a fishing activity. (This provision currently applies only to Alaska.)

migrant children face related to educational interruption due to repeated moves are:
- High absentee rate
- Falling behind academically
- Poor performance or failure to complete state assessments
- Different graduation and curriculum requirements
- High dropout rate

When migrant students move from one school to another, even within the same school district, they need to make myriad adjustments – new school, new teacher, new friends. Then, just when they get comfortable, it’s often time to move again. If the move is to another state, the stakes can be much higher. The receiving state may have different graduation requirements and state assessments and may not offer certain classes, resulting in lost credits. If the schools do not communicate, the frustration felt by the student in having to repeat classes can lead to the student giving up and dropping out of school.

There are many ways you can help migrant children overcome some of their barriers. First of all, you need to know who your migrant students are. An administrator should be able to provide you with a list of migrant students. The next thing is to find out if there is a pattern of interruption in schooling. A simple conversation with each migrant student can yield important information. For example, you may find some families leave every year before the school year ends and return after the next school year begins. With this knowledge, you can help make arrangements for the students to complete the end-of-year exams early so they do not have to repeat the school year. Find out what your district’s plan is to meet the needs of students enrolling late and withdrawing early, and work within those parameters. Some additional ways you can help migrant students include:
- Ensure students who move among states are not penalized by the differences in curriculum and graduation requirements.
- Ensure students are provided with appropriate educational support services addressing their needs.

- Design programs to address challenges faced by migrant students such as: educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems and other factors that prevent children from succeeding in school and to successfully transition to postsecondary education or employment.

Share Information
Technology is one way to help with the success and continuity in education. The U.S. Department of Education has implemented the Migrant Student Information Exchange Initiative, whose primary mission is to ensure the appropriate enrollment, placement and accrual of credits for migrant children. The Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) is the technology allowing states to share educational and health information on migrant children who travel from state to state and who, as a result, have student records in multiple states’ information systems.

MSIX works in concert with the existing migrant student information systems states currently use to manage their migrant data to ensure the appropriate enrollment, placement and accrual of credits for migrant children nationwide. This technology can assist school districts when a migrant student enters or returns to their district.

The Migrant Education Program falls under Title I, Part C and provides that
states use program funds to identify eligible children and provide education and support services. Services include: academic instruction, remedial and compensatory instruction, bilingual and multicultural instruction, vocational instruction, career education services, special guidance, counseling and testing services, health services and preschool services. Funds not only provide for supportive services to address migrant students’ specific needs but also to ensure migrant students receive the same opportunities as other students to meet state academic achievement standards.

Work with your local Migrant Education Program and learn about the services it provides to maximize the resources you can share with migrant students and help them succeed. These services may look different from program to program, but some of the possible support can include:

- Counseling services
- Tutoring services
- Secondary credit accrual
- Materials and technology
- School supplies
- Uniforms
- Summer programs for remediation and enhancement

When thinking about the education of migrant students there are some questions to consider:

- Are the needs of migrant students met in schoolwide programs?
- Are the parents and teachers of migrant students involved in the planning of schoolwide programs?
- Do migrant students participate in school programs?
- Are the parents of migrant children involved in the school?
- What plans are in place for students who enroll late and withdraw early?

Migrant children live unique lives that may cause them to give up on their education. However, school counselors can help them overcome the obstacles standing in their way and help them achieve success in school and in life.

Terry Ortiz is a migrant department counseling specialist for ESC Region 20, San Antonio, Texas. She can be reached at terry.ortiz@esc20.net.

Pretty amazing numbers considering that was how students graded Rice University in the 2015 edition of Princeton Review’s “The Best 379 Colleges.” The guide also includes student quotes about the university’s “stellar faculty,” “vibrant research program” and “diverse selection of courses and departments.” Such rankings reflect the amazing efforts and dedication of the Rice faculty and staff to provide the best possible educational experience.

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AID FOR STUDENTS WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS

Chances are, your school has students with chronic illness. Do you know who they are and how you can help?

BY CAROLYN A. BERGER, PH.D.

Samantha is an 11-year-old sixth-grader who was recently diagnosed with diabetes. Samantha has always excelled academically, but her new lifestyle is causing her stress. Her regimen now consists of pricking her finger six or more times daily, eliminating most of her favorite foods from her diet and regularly receiving insulin injections. Samantha’s social life has been compromised due to issues that present themselves when going to friends’ houses and parties. She has had to cut back on her favorite activities—soccer and gymnastics. Samantha feels like her diabetes controls her life, and although her grades are still excellent she feels unhappy most of the time. She visits the school nurse daily and complies with her treatment, but she feels embarrassed and alone.
Jamison is a 16-year-old 10th-grader who was diagnosed with sickle cell anemia as an infant. He has been hospitalized extensively throughout his school years due to extremely painful episodes, and he averages 15 missed days of school each year. Due to his absences, Jamison has fallen behind in his education. He does not have any friends and does not enjoy coming to school. His GPA is 1.9, he recently failed the state standardized test required for graduation, and he is considering dropping out.

Samantha and Jamison are just two examples of how chronic illness can affect students in our schools. About 15 percent to 20 percent of students in the United States live with some form of chronic illness. Therefore, regardless of where you work, you will have a student with some form of chronic illness in your caseload. Sometimes these students do not appear to have any difficulties, and educators may not even be aware of their health condition. However, regardless of whether or not a student with chronic illness is able to manage his/her academic standing, the needs of these students cannot be ignored.

Students with chronic illness often feel isolated from their peers because of their conditions. They may not have the strong peer connections due to frequent hospitalizations and limited extracurricular activities. These students may dread holiday or birthday celebrations because often they cannot partake in the festivities due to diet restrictions caused by their illness. Students with chronic illness might live in fear of pain or death. Mental health concerns such as depression, anxiety and social withdrawal are more common for students with chronic illness.

In addition to social/emotional concerns, approximately one-third of students with chronic illness have academic problems. These problems are most often due to lower school attendance, but they may also stem from neurocognitive deficits caused by the chronic illness. Short-term memory impairment and distractibility are often present in students with certain chronic illnesses (e.g., seizure disorders, sickle cell anemia, leukemia). Sometimes the treatment or medications required to manage the chronic illness can also cause neurocognitive deficits.

Regardless of whether or not a student with chronic illness presents with significant academic or social/emotional problems, these students need to feel supported in their school environment.

School counselors play a key role in supporting students with chronic illness. It is critical that school counselors take a strong leadership role to help meet these students’ needs. In this leadership role, school counselors will collaborate with a wide variety of stakeholders and advocate for the students’ needs. School counselors can provide direct services while in the school environment to assist the student. So the question is: How can you begin to work toward meeting the needs of students with chronic illness?

**Step One**

The first step you need to take in advocating for these students is to educate yourself about which students in your school suffer from a chronic illness. You may run into issues with obtaining this information because of concerns with adherence to FERPA (and sometimes HIPAA) guidelines. To learn more about compliance with FERPA and HIPAA guidelines in schools, access the document developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education regarding student health records (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa-hippa-guidance.pdf). This document explains that student health records cannot be shared without written parent/guardian consent unless the disclosure is to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

Once you have the students’ names, you can access the students’ achievement and achievement-related data. Thoroughly review the students’ academic records and files, including grades, test scores, attendance, discipline and promotion/retention information. Does the student have an IEP or 504? What services are already being provided to the child? Sometimes you will find students are already well-supported, most likely due to a strong parent/guardian advocate. However, other times you may find a student has a wide variety of needs not being addressed adequately. In addition to reviewing school records, meet with the students with chronic illness individually to assess their needs. Consultation with the students’ families and teachers during this process is essential. Hearing from students, parents and teachers will help you gain a broader perspective of the students’ needs and concerns.

The next step is to assess the gaps in meeting these students’ needs. Consider needs such as: counseling services to connect students with their peers, development of a system for managing absences/hospitalizations, strengthening connections with families, educating teachers/staff on chronic illness, management of 504 plans and many more. Once you determine the necessary services, this is when you get to actually advocate. Speak up on behalf of the student. Talk to administrators, school nurses, parents, teachers, cafeteria workers, whomever necessary to begin implementing services that will better meet these students’ needs.

You may find that despite your best efforts, the system continues to fail to meet the needs of students with chronic illness. This may be due to school district policies or a lack of school resources. For example, a school district may have a rule that a student must be absent at least 10
times in one school year prior to receiving any hospital or homebound services. This is a reactive vs. a proactive policy. Why wait until a student with chronic illness has been out of school for two whole weeks before initiating services? This is when you have to escalate your advocacy efforts, and you will need to advocate beyond the school level. Enlist the support of your administrators, teachers and parents to take the concerns to the school district and/or school board.

**Assign a Coordinator**

Systematically evaluating the needs of students with chronic illness and ensuring that these needs are met is a schoolwide effort. It is essential that one leader within the school be coordinating these efforts. Each school needs to identify a point person to focus on meeting the needs of students with chronic illness (i.e., a chronic illness coordinator). A chronic illness coordinator would work with parents, teachers, health professionals and agencies that can assist with meeting the students’ needs.

The chronic illness coordinator will work hand-in-hand with all stakeholders to ensure students are regularly identified and needs are evaluated. The coordinator’s duties would include: maintaining a list of students with chronic illness, setting up parent/student meetings at beginning of year, documenting that teachers are informed of student needs and accommodations, coordinating trainings/workshops for faculty on the chronic illness, advocating for students and communicating with administration on needs of students. The coordinator’s duties are similar to that of an IEP or 504 coordinator, and therefore these efforts could be combined. However, not all families of students with a chronic illness want their child to have an official 504 plan, and these students cannot be left out of the monitoring process.

The chronic illness coordinator should set up meetings with families of students with chronic illness at the beginning of the school year. Ideally, this meeting would include the student, his/her parent/guardian, the student’s teachers, school counselor and school nurse. During this meeting, the chronic illness coordinator should discuss any of the following that apply:

- school policies and resources (e.g. 504 plans, hospital homebound, etc.)
- an absenteeism plan (e.g. collection of make-up work on a regular basis)
- a plan for transitioning back to school when longer absences occur
- methods of communication with teachers and other pertinent school staff
- communication with health care professionals outside of school
- the student’s academic standing
- any concerns parents might have (e.g., student’s well-being, social concerns, etc.)
- referrals that may be needed (e.g., school counselor, mental health counselor, tutoring)

A plan for meeting student’s needs should be decided upon by the student, family and chronic illness coordinator. Each school faculty member will play a role in the implementation plan. School counselors play an important part in the implementation, and two things you should consider include: collaborating to increase belongingness and provision of direct services.

**Collaborating to increase belongingness:** Regardless of the student’s specific academic and social/emotional concerns, a key focus should be to increase the students’ sense of belongingness. Students with chronic illness often feel different, misunderstood and isolated. One way to reduce these unpleasant feelings is to collaborate with the family to participate in school events. Invite the family to talk with faculty about what their child’s life is like on a daily basis, and ask the student to play an active role in this discussion. Teachers may not understand the struggles this student experiences and therefore may misinterpret students’ behaviors. Bringing the family in to explain these issues will reduce confusion and misunderstanding. If students with chronic illness are comfortable with the idea, they could also share with classmates about their experiences. For example, a student with cystic fibrosis might need to carry an oxygen tank to help her breathe. The student could teach her peers about her condition and show her classmates how the tank works.

Assign a Coordinator

This can help reduce peer teasing and isolation of the student with chronic illness.

Connecting school faculty to the school nurse as well as outside health care professionals is beneficial to educate the faculty about the chronic illness. Faculty may not understand why the student needs access to a note-taker or frequent bathroom breaks. The nurse and health care professionals can help faculty understand the medical need for these accommodations. National or local health associations or foundations might be able to provide on-site trainings, webinars or resources for free to your faculty, so collaborating with these groups can also be beneficial.

Another reason to connect with community associations and foundations is to conduct fundraising efforts and/or events that show support for the child who experiences the chronic illness. You could coordinate a fundraiser for the National Children’s Cancer Society and benefits could either go to the association, or if the family agrees, the funds could go toward the child’s treatment. Showing the family that the school faculty and students care about the student’s well being is critical, and having a schoolwide event for a chronic illness foundation would be one way to show the family support.

A special note to make is that each individual student’s situation is unique and must be treated as such. Not all students with chronic illness and their families would welcome the spotlight of presenting information to faculty. Many families might shy away from being the focus of a fundraiser. Therefore, be sure you know the student’s and family’s preference before staging these types of events.

**Providing direct services:** In addition to helping increase the student’s sense of belonging, school counselors need to closely consider the academic, career and social/emotional needs of students with chronic illness. Of course you already do this for every child, but students with chronic illness are used to trying to blend in. Therefore, these students may mask their needs better than other students. Academic needs might include absenteeism/progress monitoring, providing tutoring services and making sure academic accommodations are being followed in
Monitoring students even if they receive outside services is crucial, and students should have easy access to you as needed.

the classroom. Students with chronic illness may have unique career concerns that are not addressed in the regular classroom career lessons. Students with chronic illness may worry about how they can manage going to college and getting a job due to the demands of managing their illness. If necessary, teach students about the Americans with Disabilities Act so they can advocate for their needs as an adult. Assertiveness skills could be incorporated into the career training for students with chronic illness, as they are going to have to assert themselves at times to best self-advocate.

Pay close attention to the social/emotional needs of students with chronic illness. As mentioned earlier, depression, anxiety and isolation are some of the mental health concerns for these students. Students experiencing mental health concerns should be referred to a mental health counselor. However, monitoring students even if they receive outside services is crucial, and students should have easy access to you as needed. Regular check-ins with the students would benefit them if they have a history of social/emotional concerns. These check-ins will help you establish a strong rapport with the students so they know they have an adult ally at school. Group counseling in the school and helping the students make positive peer connections are other potential services for students with chronic illness.

Chronically ill students need our attention but often get left out of critical planning. Systemic issues and lack of resources are obstacles, but they aren’t insurmountable. A school counselor who strongly advocates and collaborates can help these students increase their academic achievement and feel like they belong.

Carolyn Berger, Ph.D. is an assistant professor at Nova Southeastern University. She currently serves as the Florida School Counselor Association Governing Board chair. She can be reached at cs453@nova.edu.

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Make your plans now to attend the 2015 ASCA Annual Conference, “Spice Up Your School Counseling Program,” June 28–July 1, 2015, in Phoenix, Ariz. You won’t want to miss the inspiring keynote speakers, educational breakout sessions and networking opportunities. You’ll be able to fulfill your continuing education needs with the chance to earn CEUs, graduate credit and/or NBCC clock hours. Online registration is now open. Register by March 1, 2015, for the best rates. Visit www.schoolcounselor.org/spice for full details on the conference.

The Sheraton Phoenix Downtown is the official conference hotel. ASCA has reserved a block of rooms at a special rate of $135 single/double occupancy. When making your hotel reservation, mention ASCA to get this rate; call (866) 837-4213. All conference sessions and the exhibit hall will be at the Phoenix Convention Center.

ASCA thanks its conference sponsors, whose generous contributions allow us to keep the registration rates as low as possible. 2015 sponsors to date include: Forrest T. Jones & Co., LECOM, National Student Clearinghouse, Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, SecondStep, Universal Technical Institute, University of Nebraska High School, Watch DOGS and Wentworth Institute of Technology.

Keynote Speakers
This year’s keynote speakers will inspire, entertain and motivate you, sharing their stories, ideas and visions. Keynote sessions include:

**Fredi Lajvardi: “Spare Parts: Improbable to Unstoppable”**
Fredi Lajvardi shares his first-hand account of the story that brought renewed national focus to STEM education and inspired “Spare Parts,” the full-length motion picture starring comedic legend George Lopez. With humor and passion, Lajvardi reveals the simple secrets to his national champion robotics team’s unprecedented success and imparts to audiences the same wisdom, spirit of inventiveness and determination that transformed an improbable group of disadvantaged Hispanic teenagers into an unstoppable national powerhouse.

**Tim Shriver: “The School of What Matters Most”**
Ask any parent or educator what he or she wants for young people in life, and the responses likely have little to do with academic content and more about learning how to treat each other with respect, to be good citizens, to be strong and self-aware, find positive role models and learn to follow their dreams. Tim Shriver, Ph.D., will share his journey to answer this important question of what matters most and how he found answers among people least expected: teenagers labeled “disadvantaged,” spiritual masters mostly “disconnected” from their cultures and the athletes of Special Olympics labeled “disabled.”

**Tim Federle: “From Bullied to Broadway to Books”**
Called “the perfect mentor” by CNN and declared “born quipping” by The New York Times, author Tim Federle’s funny and engaging speech covers the frequently overlooked life skills he learned as a Broadway performer that he wished he’d been taught growing up as a bullied theater kid. You’ll, learn, laugh and leave Phoenix with unexpected tips and techniques for engaging those out-of-the-box students whose futures seem the most uncertain and whose lives you can help influence forever.

**Featured Session: College- and Career-Readiness Leadership Strategies, Joyce Brown, Chicago Public Schools**
School counselors must lead students to postsecondary opportunities. Focus on practical, data-driven college and career readiness strategies you can put into practice immediately. Discover how school counselors can take the lead in improving students’ college and career readiness. Walk away with knowledge and ready-to-use tools that will inspire you to improve the college and career-readiness practices in your school or district. ☉
REGISTRATION FORM
ASCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE / June 28–July 1 / PHOENIX

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Specify Preferred Name of School/Institution ____________________________________________

3. PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS – JUNE 28
These workshops include no meals. Please list your preference by letter (A–J) under the time category below. (See www.schoolcounselor.org/spice for descriptions.)

Full Day (9 a.m.–4 p.m.), $70
A B
Half Day (9 a.m.–12 p.m.), $35
C D E F G
Half Day (1–4 p.m.), $35
H I J K
(Pick One)
(Pick One)

4. RED CROSS: FOUNDATIONS OF DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH
☐ June 28, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. No additional charge, but you must preregister.

5. FEATURED SESSION:
☐ College- and Career-Readiness Leadership Strategies, $50
(See www.schoolcounselor.org/spice for description.)
June 28, 1–4 p.m.

*Student member rate is for master’s-level students only. Doctoral students register at the regular ASCA member rate.

6. AWARDS RECOGNITION DINNER
Join ASCA at this special recognition dinner honoring this year’s Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) recipients and other award winners.
Recognition Dinner, $75 Quantity ______ Total Cost ____________

7. SPOUSE/GUEST REGISTRATION
A spouse/guest registration includes the opening reception, lunches, coffee breaks and access to the exhibit hall. It does NOT include general sessions, breakout sessions or other educational sessions. Please note, this is a professional conference and not meant for children. Due to liability issues, no one under 18 will be allowed in the exhibit hall or breakout session rooms.
Name of Spouse/Guest for badge ____________________________
Spouse/Guest Registration, $175 $ ____________________________

8. GUEST TICKETS
Purchase individual guest tickets for the opening reception only if you are not purchasing the full spouse/guest registration package.
Opening Reception, $30 Quantity ______ Total Cost ____________

9. TOTAL REGISTRATION FEES
Conference Registration $ ____________
Pre-conference Workshops $ ____________
Featured Session $ ____________
Awards Recognition Dinner $ ____________
Spouse/Guest Registration $ ____________
Guest Tickets Total $ ____________
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(Note, if you are paying by purchase order only, please add $10 to cover administrative processing costs; all purchase orders must be paid before the conference begins.)
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10. PAYMENT INFORMATION
Cancellations must be submitted in writing no later than June 1.
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Will you want a printed program onsite, or will you be more likely to use the conference mobile app instead? (Note, this is not binding. You are not tied to the decision you make at this time.)
☐ I’ll want a printed program.
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School counselors help students reach higher by focusing on their academic, career and social/emotional development. We recognize this, and in 2014, Michelle Obama, the First Lady of the United States (FLOTUS) did too. The result: The role of the school counselor has taken center stage in ways not seen in a half century.

For the past year, ASCA has worked with Mrs. Obama’s office to develop and promote her Reach Higher Initiative to expand college access for all students. ASCA participated in the White House’s first College Opportunity Summit in January and then asked the First Lady to speak at ASCA’s annual conference in July 2014 in Orlando.

Mrs. Obama spoke at a general session keynote, praising the work school counselors do every day to enrich students’ academic and social/emotional development. She also announced plans to recognize school counselors’ work by honoring ASCA’s 2015 School Counselor of the Year at the White House. The ceremony recognizing winner Cory Notestine of Colorado’s Alamosa High School, the four finalists and the semifinalists will be held in late January.

In July 2014, the White House partnered with ASCA, the Harvard Graduate School of Education and other organizations to host a meeting featuring 130 experts in college access and counseling. The meeting’s purpose was to look at how students, especially low-income youth and first-generation immigrants, can receive more assistance to pursue postsecondary education.

The work continued throughout the fall. In November, ASCA staff participated in and spoke at a White House meeting about ways to strengthen school counseling and college student advising at San Diego State University. Then, in early December, ASCA was part of the White House College Opportunity Day of Action in Washington, D.C., where President Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and the First Lady announced 600 new actions to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.

In announcing the actions, Mrs. Obama cited ASCA’s school counselor-to-student ratios, currently at 471-to-1, as a barrier to student success. “Every one of us has a role to play,” she said, highlighting the commitments made by universities, nonprofits and school districts as a huge step in the right direction.

“Universities across the country have pledged to create college- and career-readiness courses in their master’s programs for school counselors. School districts are partnering with nonprofits and colleges to provide training for counselors once they’re in our schools. Nonprofits are stepping up to improve student-and-counselor ratios and bringing recent graduates into schools to serve as role models and mentors,” the First Lady said. “These are outstanding commitments, and we need more efforts like these all across this country.”

School counselors must take a comprehensive, developmental and collaborative role in working with students. Using data, they can help ensure equitable outcomes for all students by collaborating with all those who play a role in supporting students as they navigate postsecondary options.

Fortunately, others see the need and the critical role of the school counselor in making this work successful. Thanks to the spotlight shown on the profession by Mrs. Obama, who was dubbed the nation’s “school counselor in chief” by one of her advisors, we know we have the support to make it happen. We can’t wait to see what this year brings.
2014 ASCA Annual Conference attendees ready to enter the general session to hear the First Lady. In her address, Mrs. Obama said, “I want to recognize all of you for everything you do for our young people every single day. And I have to tell you, when I found out that you all were making me an honorary school counselor, my first thought was, there is absolutely no way I’m worthy of this honor. Because I know that you all have one of the hardest, most stressful, most important and most underappreciated jobs of anyone in this country – and I live with the President of the United States. So frankly, when I think about what you all do on an average day, well, quite frankly, I’m amazed.”

“Thank you for your passion and your dedication,” Mrs. Obama said at the 2014 ASCA Annual Conference. “Thank you for refusing to give up on a single child because you believe that every child has promise and every child has something to contribute... Here’s the thing, ASCA members, whenever you get tired, and I know that you do, whenever you get frustrated or overwhelmed, and I know that you do, I want you to think about the extraordinary ripple effect of your work, because it’s real. I want you to think about the impact you have not just on every child whose life you transform, but on the family that child will raise, on the business where that child will work, on the community that child will one day serve. I want you to think about how long after those kids graduate your work lives on in their hearts and minds – and in the hearts and minds of everyone they touch.”

The 2015 School Counselor of the Year, Cory Notestine (center) and finalists Jennifer Diaz, Liz Parker, Jennifer Degruise and Tawnya Pringle proudly show off their college gear, in honor of the First Lady’s Reach Higher Initiative, which is her effort to inspire all students in America to take charge of their future by completing their education past high school, whether at a professional training program, a community college or a four-year college or university. On Feb. 6, 2015, the last day of National School Counseling Week, ASCA encourages all members to tweet out or post on Facebook a picture of themselves in their college gear with the hashtags #ReachHigher and #NSCW15.
NOTESTINE NAMED 2015 SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to the 2015 School Counselor of the Year, Cory Notestine, school counselor, Alamosa High School, Alamosa, Colo. Notestine was named School Counselor of the Year in a surprise assembly at his school in November 2014.

In addition to the School Counselor of the Year, four finalists were selected:

• Jennifer Degruise, Montegut Middle School, Montegut, La.
• Jennifer Diaz, White Oak Elementary School, Sugar Hill, Ga.
• Liz Parker, Dumbarton Elementary School, Laurel, Va.
• Tawnya Pringle, Hoover High School, San Diego, Calif.

Notestine, the four finalists and the semi-finalists will visit Washington, D.C., in late January 2015, where they will be honored in a ceremony at the White House, participate in a congressional briefing, meet with members of Congress and be honored at an awards gala on Jan. 30. The School Counselor of the Year event officially kicks off National School Counseling Week, Feb. 2-6, 2015.

Watch for the March/April ASCA School Counselor, with expanded coverage of the 2015 School Counselor of the Year event.
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MAGAZINE APP LAUNCHED

Looking to read ASCA School Counselor magazine on your tablet or smart phone? Download the ASCA School Counselor app from your preferred app marketplace, log in with your ASCA username and password, and you’re ready to go. Be sure to turn on notifications so you get alerted when each new issue is available. The app is available for both Apple and Android devices.

Want to share articles you find particularly interesting with other school counselors or school staff? Simply forward the article link from within the app. (Note, nonmembers will be able to read four pages of the publication before they’re prompted to join to read the rest of the magazine.)

Just think, now you’ll always have something to read when you’re standing in line at Starbucks or waiting for your kids in the carpool lane.

Prefer to read the magazine on your computer or a Windows device? Access the digital version from www.schoolcounselor.org/magazine. Members will, of course, still receive their print versions in the mail.

2015 WEBINAR LINEUP

Looking for some free professional development you can attend from the comfort of your home or office? ASCA has booked an exciting schedule of webinars for winter/spring 2015. Learn more or register at www.schoolcounselor.org/webinars.

Lessons That Sparkle
Jan. 15, 2015, 4 p.m. Eastern
Speaker: Julie Ford

Building Resiliency: A Non-thematic Group
Jan. 21, 2015, 3 p.m. Eastern
Speaker: Karen Griffith, Ph.D., LPC

Creative Counseling Techniques for Difficult Students
Feb. 10, 2015, 2 p.m.
Speakers: Christine Schimmel, Ed.D., and Ed Jacobs

Game Over: Overcoming Compulsive Video Gaming
Feb. 11, 2015, 2:30 p.m. Eastern
Speaker: Tobin Bakkedahl

Help Students Reduce Anxiety
March 2, 2015, 10 a.m. Eastern
Speaker: Mary McCormac, Ph.D.

Empower African-American Male Student-Athletes Through Group Counseling
March 10, 2015, 12 p.m. Eastern
Speaker: Paul Harris

SMILE: An Uplifting Approach to Help Elementary Children Heal from Grief/Loss
April 11, 2015, 10 a.m. Eastern
Speaker: Annie MacDonald

PK-12 Career Exploration: Relevancy in a Common Core and RTI Landscape
April 23, 2015, 4 p.m. Eastern
Speaker: Richard Cleveland

STEM Careers for Every Student
May 14, 2015, 1 p.m. Eastern
Speaker: Meagan Pollock, Ph.D.

Create a College-Going Culture
June 3, 2015, 10 a.m. Eastern
Speaker: Latoya Kosh
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SHOW YOUR ASCA PRIDE
Have you taken an ASCA U Specialist training program or participated in other ASCA professional development? Show your “school pride” with an ASCA U sweatshirt. Available in sizes S-XXL, the sweatshirts are $25 for members, $35 for nonmembers. Order online at www.schoolcounselor.org/bookstore. (Search under the ASCA Merchandise category.)

HEALTH COVERAGE FOR STUDENTS
The Health Insurance Marketplace is open. Children and families can sign up for affordable health coverage at HealthCare.gov or by calling (800) 318-2596. Open enrollment ends on Feb. 15, 2015. All plans in the Marketplace cover essential health benefits, pre-existing conditions and more. The following fact sheets and fliers provide helpful information for your students:


CELEBRATE SCHOOL COUNSELING
National School Counseling Week 2015 will be celebrated from Feb. 2-6, 2015, to focus public attention on the unique contribution of professional school counselors within U.S. school systems. National School Counseling Week, sponsored by ASCA, highlights the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career. National School Counseling Week is always celebrated the first full week in February.

To help you promote the week, ASCA has developed many materials and documents, a number of which are free. See what’s available at www.schoolcounselor.org/nscw.

Help us celebrate school counselors all week long on Twitter and Facebook. Join the National School Counseling Week Photo Challenge. Take a selfie appropriate for the day’s theme and share it online with the hashtag #nscw15.

SEND US YOUR SELFIE!

Happy National School Counseling Week
Download our National School Counseling Week sign from www.schoolcounselor.org/nscw and take a selfie with it.

Decoration
Let’s see how you decorated your bulletin boards, hallways and/or offices for National School Counseling Week.

Passion
Download our “I love being a school counselor because” sign, complete it and take a selfie.

Appreciation
Did staff or students bring you treats or make signs? Let’s see you with them.

Reach Higher
Let’s see you in your college gear.
One of the best benefits of ASCA membership is access to a plethora of free resources. From sample lesson plans to job descriptions, checklists to back-to-school handouts, your membership opens the door to a world of materials to use on a daily basis.

**TOPICS INCLUDE:**
- Abuse
- Academic Achievement/Success
- Accountability/Advocacy
- Anger Management
- Behavioral Issues
- Bibliocounseling
- Bullying
- Career Development
- Character Education
- Postsecondary Planning
- Crisis/Trauma/Violence
- Death/Dying/Grief
- Disabilities/Special Needs
- Eating Disorders/Body Image
- Group Counseling
- Homeless Youth/Foster Care
- Legal and Ethical Issues
- LGBTQ
- Mental Health
- Mentoring/Peer Mediation
- Parent & Family Resources
- RTI/PBIS
- Sample School Counselor Forms/Needs Assessments
- Self-injury
- Service Learning
- Substance Use/Abuse
- Suicide/Suicide Prevention
- Transitions
- Urban School Counseling
- War/Deployment

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**FEBRUARY 2015**
- African-American History Month
- American Heart Month
- National Boost-Your-Self-Esteem Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month

1 National Freedom Day
2 Groundhog Job Shadow Day
2-6 National School Counseling Week
4 Digital Learning Day
9-15 Random Acts of Kindness Week
22 World Thinking Day
23-March 1 National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

**MARCH 2015**
- American Red Cross Month
- Gender Equality Month
- Music in our Schools Month
- National Middle Level Education Month
- National Nutrition Month
- National Social Work Month
- National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month
- National Women's History Month
- Youth Art Month

2 Read Across America Day
2-6 National School Breakfast Week
2-8 National Sleep Awareness Week
8 International Women’s Day
8-14 Teen Tech Week
12-18 Girl Scout Week
15-21 National Poison Prevention Week
18 Kick Butts Day
21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
22 World Water Day
HOW DO YOU BUILD COMMUNITY AMONG THE DIVERSE POPULATIONS IN YOUR SCHOOL?

We promote a school culture of trust, respect and responsibility through project-based learning. Classroom group work and school culture challenges our students to work with all types. This opportunity makes them face their differences and work together. It creates some very unusual and beautiful friendships. 

Jodi Brattin, Colegio International de Carabobo, Valencia, Carabobo, Venezuela

Our greatest diversity is socio-economic. We balance our advisory groups to ensure that we mix genders, towns, students with special needs, gifted students and any other variables that we can think of. Our advisory program is at the heart of all that we do. We have been careful with mixing the kids so that we could break down cliques. Students graduate with their advisory group after being together for four years, and they definitely come to appreciate each other by then.

Hillary Bush, Poland Regional High School, Poland, Maine

We discuss cultural similarities and differences when they arise in conflict. We often speak about differences between the United States and other countries and cultures.

Randi Brattin, Colegio Internacional de Carabobo, Valencia, Carabobo, Venezuela

We have a “WEST” club, which is essentially a multicultural club, and we have a Gay Straight Alliance group. We have a ninth-grade mentoring program, an eighth- to ninth-grade transition program, hold cultural fairs, offer opportunities for students to mix it up and sit at with different people at lunch. We offer support groups for a variety of racial groups with community members coming in to offer support and mentoring.

Amy J. DeGroot Hammer, Sioux City West High School, Sioux City, Iowa

Our school is not very diverse. We are 70 percent free and reduced lunch and 98 percent white. Our issue stems more from breaking stereotypes and exposing our students to different ideas, areas and cultures. We try to take a lot of field trips and bring in a lot of speakers. We also have a Parent Resource Center and do many parent workshops that involve dinner and childcare.

Christina Welch, Mabel Elementary School, Zionville, N.C.

There are many opportunities for students and parents to build connections, in and out of the classroom. Students volunteer and do extended service projects together. There are many celebrations and festivals throughout the year for students and families, and everyone pitches in to help. We have a long tradition of welcoming diverse populations, whether that relates to culture, race, family structure, sexual orientation or otherwise disenfranchised individuals. A school committee keeps topics of diversity at the forefront and also provides opportunities, such as anti-racism training, for all. A social worker provides opportunities for student group discussion and to bring up sensitive topics.

Diane Meinke, Chicago Waldorf School, Chicago, Ill.

My students reach out and participate in service-learning activities that help the community and make them feel a part of the larger community. Examples from the past 12 months: blood donation truck on campus, food collection and distribution at Thanksgiving, toy collection at Christmas for Salvation Army, assist in painting a local church. Considering about 90 percent of my students are low-income, this is pretty amazing.

Mary Huntington, West Area Adult School, Lakeland, Fla.
Whether you are new to the field or have years of experience, an ASCA Specialist designation from ASCA U can help you further master important school counseling-related subject areas. Go back to school with ASCA U.

**LEGAL & ETHICAL SPECIALIST**

School counselors face legal and ethical challenges every day. From confidentiality issues to records maintenance, from duty of care to sexual harassment issues, a school counselor’s legal and ethical questions can spring up from every corner. Earn the ASCA Legal & Ethical Specialist designation to master these difficult subjects.

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Learn more: www.schoolcounselor.org/ethics-specialist

**BULLYING PREVENTION SPECIALIST**

Bullying is a difficult issue that students can face in any school, and school counselors are often the first person students or parents contact when bullying happens. Earn the ASCA Bullying Prevention Specialist designation to be best prepared to prevent bullying or intervene when bullying occurs.

$99 (for nonmembers)  
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Learn more: www.schoolcounselor.org/bullyingprevention

**SCHOOL COUNSELING LEADERSHIP SPECIALIST**

The need for effective leaders in school counseling has never been greater. Students need school counselors to be effective educational leaders who can effect systemic change in their schools. ASCA and state school counselor associations need leaders who can guide the school counseling profession into the future. To address these needs, ASCA has developed a new professional development package – the School Counseling Leadership Specialist program. This course is meant to be transformative. It doesn’t focus on how leaders behave but how leaders think, not what leaders do but what leaders are.

$99 (for nonmembers)  
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Learn more: www.schoolcounselor.org/leadership-specialist

**SCHOOL COUNSELING DATA SPECIALIST**

Collecting and analyzing data can help school counselors and their administrators identify achievement gaps, understand educational issues and assess programs to ensure they are making a difference for all students. To address the need for school counselors to understand how to use data in their programs, ASCA offers the School Counseling Data Specialist program.

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Learn more or register at www.schoolcounselor.org/ascau
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