

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Victoria Holbrook, Counselor

Re: Summary of Counseling and Advising Activities Second Semester 2011-2012

Date: June 6, 2012

The National Standards for school counseling programs are what the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) believes to be essential elements of a quality and effective school counseling program. The standards are public statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program. Following the ASCA model, the Geneva High School Counseling and Advising Department centers student based activities in the areas of Academic Development, Career/College Development and Personal/Social Development. In addition to utilizing the National Standards and the ASCA model, the Illinois Social and Emotional Standards were used as guidelines to developing activities utilized to help students with Personal/Social Development. The following is a summary of these activities organized by the appropriate domain. In many cases, the activities apply to more than one realm and overlap may occur. At the end of the document is a listing of Professional Development the members of the department participated in this semester.

## **Academic Development**

**Course Withdrawals:** Students can withdraw from a course within the first six weeks of the semester and obtain a study hall. Students must obtain a withdrawal form from Naviance, secure the necessary signatures and return the form to the Counseling Office for approval and schedule change. A total of 146 withdrawals were processed this semester.

**Level Changes:** Students may choose a higher or lower level of a course within the first three weeks of a semester. Students generally meet with his/her counselor to obtain a form and then obtain appropriate signatures. The schedule is changed when the level change is approved.

**Waivers:** The Counseling and Advising Support Staff processed applications of students who applied for study hall waivers. A total of 117 were entered into the computer for this semester.

**Registration Process:** All students registered for next year's classes online November 15-November 27, 2011. Each student was seen individually by the counselors to review his/her course selections during February and March. Postcards were sent to student's homes with a specific appointment time determined by each counselor. Additionally, a master list of appointments was posted on the Counseling and Advising windows for student reference. Students who missed his/her appointments were seen on makeup days. All students were seen individually by his/her counselor. As mentioned in last semester's board report, current juniors were seen individually in December for registration as well as a discussion on post secondary plans.

**Correspondence Courses:** Students needing additional coursework to graduate or supplement their high school curriculum are offered courses through the American School of Correspondence, Brigham Young University School of Correspondence, or Illinois Virtual School. The counselors assist students in choosing appropriate courses and facilitate the registration process when necessary.

**Homebound/Hospital Liaison:** Counselors work with homebound tutors and/or hospital tutors to secure homework assignments for students who are ill or hospitalized for an extended period of time. Work is shared between the private tutor and the classroom teacher and appropriate documentation is secured for attendance purposes. This service allows students to remain current in classes while unable to attend school. A recent study conducted by the Counseling and Advising Department with the assistance of Ms. Susan Shrader, Dean of Students showed an increase in hospitalizations from last year to this year. A total of 13 students were hospitalized during the 2010-2011 school year. This year, a total of 41 students were hospitalized.

**Problem Solving Team:** The counselors, social workers, psychologists, deans and nurses are members of the Problem Solving Team (PST). This team meets every Tuesday afternoon for several hours discussing students who may be struggling with academic, social/emotional, or behavioral issues at Geneva High School. The counselors check the weekly eligibility report and bring students to the meeting who are failing or in danger of failing courses. The counselors are responsible for completing paperwork in advance of the meeting that requires test data, previous grade information, current teacher input and any other factors the team needs to be aware of. The team brainstorms ideas to help the student become more successful and will on occasion suggest a supported study hall, study seminar or a case study to determine the need for additional educational services.

**Summer School Information:** The Counseling and Advising Department disseminates information about a variety of summer school options available to students including Geneva High School's summer school. Members of the support staff handle the registration for the GHS summer school program handling fees and class lists. If GHS doesn't offer a course students need in summer school they are referred to Waubensee Community College or College of DuPage summer programs for high school students. All students who failed a required class are

contacted by the counselors to determine if the student wants to take the course in summer school or rescheduled it into their class schedule for next year.

**Credit Updates:** Counselors keep track of a student's academic progress each semester, checking to see that students are on target for graduation. Parents of seniors in jeopardy of failing courses or who are credit deficient are contacted by the counselors. A non-graduating senior is offered options for completing her/his high school diploma which may include summer school, correspondence coursework, or returning to Geneva High School for a fifth year.

**Schedule Conflicts:** In preparation for the 2012-2013 school year, counselors check all student schedules against course requests to verify enrollment in appropriate classes. Alternate course choices are utilized if necessary. Students who have schedule conflicts that require student and/or parent input are seen by the counselors before the end of the school year.

## **Career/College Development**

**Naviance:** The Counseling and Advising Department continued to utilize a new web-based computer software program called Naviance Succeed this semester. This counseling tool allows students and parents to research colleges and careers. In addition, this program allows counselors to communicate vital information to students via e-mail. For the first time, the Counseling and Advising Office can use Naviance to track and analyze data about Geneva High School graduates and their college choices and give current GHS students access to that information so they can predict the likelihood of admission at specific colleges. A form asking for college plans was developed by the Registrar and members of the Counseling and Advising Support Staff and was distributed to seniors in a late May homeroom. Students who did not complete the form were contacted so complete data could be collected and utilized.

**St. Charles College Fair:** On April 10, 2012 St. Charles North High School with cooperation from other area high schools hosted a College Fair with over 150 colleges in attendance. Geneva High School juniors received a postcard advertising the event along with 5 Questions to Ask a College Representative handout.

**ACT:** Geneva High School is a national test center for the ACT test offered on April 14, 2012. Students register online for this test date and take the test at GHS from 8:00-Noon on that date. Ms. Cathy Pool is the testing supervisor for ACT. As testing center supervisor, Ms. Pool needs to check in all testing materials and keep them secure until testing day. Additionally, she must recruit and train testing proctors who supervise 20-25 test takers per room, ensuring a quiet and

conducive testing environment following strict ACT protocols. Tests and answer document need to be counted and distributed to each room proctor the morning of the test and recounted prior to submission to ACT the afternoon of the test. Students taking the ACT need to show proper identification before being allowed to test. This year 232 students took the ACT on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

**SAT:** On May 5, 2012 Geneva High School hosted the SAT Test and the SAT Subject Area Tests. Students register online for this test. The responsibilities of the test center supervisor, Ms. Cathy Pool, are the same for the ACT. This year, 26 students took the SAT.

**PSAE:** In response to the statewide mandate that all juniors take the Prairie State Achievement Exam, all 500 juniors took this test on April 24 and 25<sup>th</sup>. Counselors helped during this two day test in various capacities including providing accommodations for special education students and/or helping to check in and count testing materials upon completion of the test.

**College Representative Visits:** College admissions representatives visit Geneva High School throughout the school year. The colleges visiting are listed on the high school webpage at [www.geneva304.org](http://www.geneva304.org) and are advertised on the daily announcements. Students are encouraged to sign up to visit with the representatives of schools they may be interested in attending via Naviance. College representatives fill out a college information form that is updated yearly and filed in a notebook next to the student sign up page for each college visit. A total of 27 colleges visited GHS this semester. Additionally, visits hosted by colleges in the Chicago area are advertised on the daily announcements as well as on our webpage and Naviance.

**Military Cafeteria Visits:** Several branches of the Armed Forces have an information booth for students during lunch hours in the cafeteria. The Marines scheduled monthly visits throughout most of the semester.

**CAP Program:** The Kane County Chronicle sponsors the Chronicle Achievement Program to honor area high school seniors who excel in academic effort, extracurricular activities, and/or service opportunities. Counseling and Advising Director Mary Jane Johnson coordinates this program for Geneva High School. The students are nominated by faculty members and his/her pictures and a brief write up about the student appears in the newspaper. This semester's recipients are: Alexandria Puff, Ben Herrera, and Martha Nelson.

**Senior Awards Night:** The Counseling and Advising Office assists with Senior Awards Night which recognizes seniors who were awarded scholarships and other honors. The scholarships are from over 40 community benefactors. Over half the senior class is honored at this event. Mrs. Cindy Kovach, counselor and Ms. Lisa Schwer are instrumental in coordinating this event with Mr. Scott McPeak, Assistant Principal and Ms. Robin Fagot.

**Scholarships:** Ms. Cindy Kovach disseminates information about scholarships available to Geneva High School students. This information is published in the Viking Vessel, announced on the daily announcements, and posted on Naviance.

**National Merit Scholarship Program:** Students who score in the top 1% nationally on the PSAT may qualify as National Merit Scholarship winners. Students named as semi-finalists continue on as finalists based on an application completed by the student's counselor. This year four Geneva High School seniors were named National Merit Finalists: James Bartusek, Courtney Kein, Mia Schrilla, and Christopher Warren. Additionally, Ryan Wyllie was a National Merit Commended Scholar.

**Selective College Night:** The GEARS group sponsored an informational session on selective college admission for parents. The Geneva High School Counseling Office assisted with this event that had over 100 parents attend.

**Financial Aid Night:** On March 22, 2012 the Counseling and Advising Office hosted Mr. Frank Palmasani, creator of My *Financial Fit* to speak to parents about funding a post-secondary education. Not only did the speaker deal with traditional federal, state and institutional financial aid sources, he also emphasized how financial aid can influence a family's college decision making process by showing that more expensive schools may actually become affordable to families, depending on the amount of financial aid that is granted.

**Career Center:** Geneva High School employs a part-time counselor, Ms. Stefany Montgomery, who helps students with career exploration. The following is a listing of her activities during this semester.

- **Career Exploration Internship Class:** Ms Montgomery has served as coordinator for this course which had an enrollment of 4 students this semester. Student interns were placed at Delnor Health and Wellness Center, Cadence Cardiology, DinoTrac, and Our Children's Homestead. These students met regularly with Ms. Montgomery to discuss their internship experience.
- **Job Shadow Days:** Ms. Montgomery organized the job shadow days on April 23 and 24 for seniors and underclassmen to participate in during the junior PSAE testing days. Approximately 19 seniors and 15 underclassmen signed up for this event. Students shadowed professionals in a variety of medical fields, graphic design, fire science, sound engineering, journalism, publishing and chemistry.
- **Grants:** Two-grants were written and received from VALEES in the amount of \$500 each. This money was used for the Career Fair and Job Shadow Programs.
- **Consumer Education Classes:** Ms. Montgomery presented to all the Consumer Education Classes teaching an interviewing lesson and explaining the resources available to students through the Career Center.
- **Junior English Classes:** All juniors were instructed on how to use Naviance to create a resume. This activity will be especially useful for students applying to college in the fall of next year.

- **Career Fair:** On May 17, Geneva High School hosted a Career Fair in the lobby of the Contest Gym. Over 22 Career Professionals set up booths and talked with students about their professions. Approximately 300 students attended this event held during the lunch hours on that day.
- **Fox Valley Career Center Fieldtrip:** Students interested in taking coursework at Fox Valley Career Center were supervised by Ms. Montgomery on a field trip to the center where they got a tour and information about the courses offered there.
- **Women in Search of Science Career Expo:** Ms. Montgomery accompanied several female students to Argonne National Laboratory to attend this career expo.
- **Job Board:** Ms. Montgomery maintains a job board throughout the school year posting jobs that are available in the community, especially for summer employment.
- **Individual Counseling:** Students interested in seeing the career counselor are seen individually to discuss career options. Students often take career assessments during these sessions.
- **Spring Career Fair:** Ms. Montgomery is currently planning for a career fair to be held at Geneva High School in March of 2012. Speakers are being secured to represent all 12 Career Clusters.
- **VALEES:** Ms. Montgomery is a member of this organization and attends their meetings.
- **STEM:** Ms. Montgomery served as a member of the committee that organized the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Fair held at Fermi Lab in April.

## **Personal/Social Development**

While all realms of an effective counseling program are important, this area received a considerable amount of attention during the second semester of the 2011-2012 school year. Several new activities were developed and implemented in response to the District 304 School Board goal regarding student health and well-being. The specific board goal addressed by the Counseling and Advising Office was “to develop programming and activities to support student success based on the Illinois Social Emotional Learning Standards.”

**Anxiety Group:** An ongoing group of high school students grades 9-12 attended a group on stress and anxiety led by Ms. Candace Martin-Phelan and Ms Michelle Vargas-Herbst. Several students participated in this group that met weekly or bi-weekly throughout the semester. Students were referred to the group by his/her counselors, teachers, or through the Problem Solving Teams.

**Special Education Groups:** Social Workers Therese White and Candace Martin-Phelan facilitate various groups for students identified with special education needs. The topics covered in these groups include social skills, social language skills, goal setting, stress/anxiety, and general counseling.

**Fueling Station:** Ms. Cathy Pool coordinates a supply of small breakfast and/or snack items that are available to identified students throughout the school day. The students who access this program may be on free and reduced lunch or may just need a little nourishment and nurturing due to difficult family situations. Items for the Fueling Station are donated by various clubs and groups at school and in the community. About 30 students participated in this program during the second semester.

**Signs Of Suicide Presentation:** This presentation was given to all freshman on April 30, 2012. Several students chose to share his/her individual struggles with depression and thoughts of suicide through poems, articles, artwork, and musical presentations. In addition, students saw a DVD produced by Alyssa's Mission, a not for profit organization that promotes suicide prevention. The DVD portrayed realistic scenarios of depressed and/or suicidal teens and effective ways friends should deal with those situations. A pre and post test activity was carried out in homerooms prior and immediately after the presentation. Any students wanting to see a counselor were seen within 1-2 days of the request.

**Naked Roommate Presentation:** Geneva High School with grant money from the PTO and the Career Center was able to host New York Times Bestselling Author, Harlan Cohen. Cohen is the author of the *Naked Roommate*, as well as *The Naked Roommate for Parents Only*. Both of these books deal with the transition to college. The author presented to all senior students during the day of May 3, 2012 and to parents that same evening. Coordination of this event was provided by Ms. Victoria Holbrook and Ms. Mary Jane Johnson.

**Assessment/Hospitalizations:** A record number of mental health related hospitalizations and suicide assessments have been done this semester by all members of the Counseling and Advising Staff. Total hospitalizations this year totaled 41 compared to 13 during 2010-2011. Additionally, approximately 100 suicide assessments were done this past year by members of the Counseling and Advising Staff. Parents were contacted after each assessment and in some cases, parents needed to pick up the student and take him/her for an assessment.

**Freshman Mentor Program:** In preparation for next fall, a new program was developed to provide peer mentors for self-identified incoming freshman. Sixty juniors and seniors volunteered to serve as peer mentor and were trained prior to the end of this semester. Peer mentor duties will include sending a welcome postcard to their incoming freshman over the summer; meeting them at freshman registration day; facilitating a scavenger hunt throughout the building to promote familiarity; and host them at an activity later in the Fall such as a Geneva High School football game.

**Faculty Presentation by Gateway Foundation:** Members of the Gateway Foundation and Geneva Police Department Detective Brad Jerdee presented information about illicit drug use and trends in drug use at a faculty meeting in April.

**Individual Counseling:** The counselors, social workers and psychologists see students as needed on an individual basis for social/emotional needs. Students may present with a variety of concerns including family stressors, interpersonal relationship issues, anxiety and stress and depression. There is an ever increasing need to integrate social/emotional education for all students and staff. Plans are underway to expand the services already in place for social emotional needs.



# Other Involvement

**Counseling Intern:** Mary Jane Johnson, Director of Counseling and Advising, continued to supervise a counseling intern, Ms. Sandy Longworth, during this semester.

**Professional Development:** Members of the Counseling and Advising Department attended the following workshops and/or conferences:

Psychologists:

- Illinois School Psychologist Association Conference 2
- Positive Parenting 1
- Yellow Ribbon Presentation 1
- Panic Disorders 1
- Beyond Talk Therapy 1
- HOPE Therapy Group from St.Charles North H.S 1
- Freshman SOS Program 1
- Social/Emotional Measures 1
- Social/Emotional Interventions 1
- Social/Emotional Screeners 1
- LGBTQ Youth:Current Trends, Bullying and Suicidality 1
- Evidence Based Treatments for Anxiety Disorders 1
- Teen Mother Program, Mooseheart 2
- Emotional First Aid, Linden Oaks 2
- School Refusal Workshop, Alexian Behavioral Health 1

Social Workers:

- NonVerbal Therapy Modalities, Alexian Bros Behavioral Health 2
- Social/Emotional Screeners and Interventions 2
- HOPE Therapy Group from St. Charles North H.S 2
- Freshman Mentoring Program 2
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Mindfulness 2
- Freshman SOS Program 2
- Holocaust Museum Field Trip 2
- Evidence Based Treatment for Anxiety Disorders 2
- Panic Disorder in Adolescents, Linden Oaks Hospital 2

- Positive Parenting 2
- Behavior Intervention Plans and Strategies 2
- Teen Mother Program at Mooseheart 2
- Emotional First Aid, Linden Oaks 2

Counselors:

- NIMS Training 6
- U of I College Media Presentation 3
- Chicago Area Regional Representatives (CARR) 2
- Exploring College Options (Georgetown, Duke, Harvard, Penn, Stanford) 3
- Visit to Linden Oaks Facility, St Charles, IL 6
- ACT Illinois Conference 1
- Lewis University Counselor Meeting 1
- Schaumburg Institute of Design 1
- Self-Injury Teen Workshop, Linden Oaks 1
- NIU First Year Experience Workshop 3
- NIU School of Business Presentation 1
- Connections Conference 1
- Emotional First Aid, Linden Oaks 6
- Teen Mother and Child Presentation at Mooseheart 6
- Fox Valley Counselors Meeting, IMSA 4
- Common Application Webinar 6
- HOPE Therapy Group from St. Charles North H.S 1

Career Specialist:

- Connections Conference 1
- Careers Conference 1