

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

WHAT IS A SCHOOL COUNSELOR?

It is likely that you are familiar with the term “**guidance counselor**”, but did you know that the profession has evolved, the duties have shifted, and the title has now changed to “**school counselor**”? Why the change? Well, let’s provide a little history. In the 1930s, vocational guidance was a new service in high schools aimed to help students determine their interests, aptitudes, and career paths. *Guidance* counselors provided services to some students, they were often reactionary, they worked to improve the school experience, and they often worked alone.



As time went on, the profession continued to evolve and grow. In 1990, the American School Counseling Association called on all professionals to change their titles to School Counselors, which better encompassed the broad scope of work they were doing in the school. School counselors had shifted to a proactive approach as they delivered services to all students. They began to measure their impact through student achievement, attendance, and behavior data instead of the old ways of surveying feelings and perceptions alone. Today, school counselors develop, manage, and evaluate the comprehensive school counseling program, making adjustments or improvements as time and needs change. They place a focus on mental health and look at the “whole child” when providing support and services.

Although the title has changed to better reflect the profession’s scope, one thing has not changed; **school counselors help and advocate for all students**. School counselors help all students apply academic achievement strategies, manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills, and plan for postsecondary options (including higher education, military careers, or the workforce). School counselors can provide:

- Individual student academic planning and goal setting
- Classroom lessons based on student success standards
- Short-term counseling to students
- Referrals for long-term support
- Collaboration with families, teachers, administrators, and the community for student success
- Assist in improving equity, access, achievement, and opportunities for all students.

Why are we talking about this now? Well, as you might know, our high school office has undergone some changes. Without a school counselor to take over our vacant position, Mrs. Stacy Chase will assist in transitioning into a new role and office within the counseling department. She will assist students with scheduling and college and career readiness. Ms. Kara Johnson, our School Social Worker, is available to support our students’ higher-level mental health needs. With Mrs. Chase moving into another office, we

have welcomed Mrs. Deb Youngberg into the role of Counseling Office Secretary. Mrs. Youngberg has been with the district for many years, and we are excited for everyone to take on their new roles and support the district as a team. Additionally, we have Mrs. Amanda Miller on staff as our elementary counselor, our school psychologist, Mrs. Katie Markiewicz.

We realize that our roles sometimes overlap, so we compiled this chart of roles to help you understand each of our jobs a little better.

Title:	School Counselor	School Social Worker	School Psychologist
Degree:	Master's Degree in School Counseling	Master's degree in Social Work	Master's degree in School Psychology
Key Role:	Preventative and proactive supports Creating and implementing the school counseling program and curriculum for all students SEL classroom lessons Counseling Services College and career planning Annual course selection (6-12)	Connection between home, school, and community Ongoing counseling to support IEP goals Development of IEP goals with interdisciplinary team Referral to community resources Counseling Services	Evaluations for Special Education determination Committee on Special Education member Committee on Preschool Special Education member Collaboration with student programming
Similarities:	Supports Student Mental Health Crisis intervention Teacher/Parent/Administration Collaboration Student Support Team Member		
	Facilitating Groups		
	Short-term Individual Counseling		
	Staff training and education		

CAREER TOURS

In February and March, we took separate groups of students to tour the Nestle Purina and Cummins Jamestown Engine Plant. We took a tour of the plant and heard about many career opportunities. It was a great experience! In April, we will be taking the seniors to the Seneca Alleghany Casino in Salamanca, where, again, they will hear about career opportunities and they will participate in a tour. This is a strong initiative to expose our students to our area's various careers and job opportunities.

LET'S CELEBRATE!

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

As a school, our goal is to support the whole child academically, socially, and emotionally. We know that children can have difficulty learning when they are emotionally struggling. We recognize that various mental health challenges have increased in children, especially following the COVID shutdown and pandemic. There has been a drastic increase in anxiety, depression, ADHD, and behavioral outbursts due to impulse control issues in children across the country. For years, mental health wasn't discussed because of a stigma surrounding it. There was shame, fear, and embarrassment. Our goal as a counseling department is to eliminate that stigma here in school and teach the students that mental health should be talked about and addressed. We want our students to understand the warning signs of various mental health concerns in both themselves and in others. Another goal is to educate students on coping and managing symptoms when they are angry, anxious, or depressed. Lastly, we want students to know when to ask for help, identify their support systems, and know when they may need the support of a professional. Join us in having these conversations with your children. Showing children that they are not alone in their struggle and that they can talk about emotions openly is so important.



THEME WEEK: APRIL 17-21

Monday 4/17: *Be Kind to Your Mind:* Wear green for Mental Health Awareness.

Tuesday 4/18: *Bring Your Inside Feelings Out, Don't Hide Them:* Wear clothes inside out. Calm-down stations will be in the cafeteria during lunches.

Wednesday 4/19: *Class Color Day:* We are a rainbow of emotions, and all our feelings are OK. Colors to be assigned to grade levels soon. (A school-wide photo will be taken of students standing in the shape of a rainbow to represent our rainbow of emotions).



Thursday 4/20: *I am Unique:* Wear any unique pattern; tie dye, plaid, polka dots, stripes, camo, etc.

Movie Night @ 5:30 pm- Watch "Ugly Dolls" with us. Bring pillows, blankets, sleeping bags and get cozy. *More details coming soon!*



Friday 4/21: *We are better together!* We are a family here at PV; wear purple.

COMING SOON!

During the month of April, we will be planning our **6th-grade transition program**. This includes a shadow day for the 6th graders and a parent night for students and families of 6th graders. We will be recruiting the help of current 7th graders to introduce and guide our 6th graders to the Jr./Sr. High School environment, introduce them to the teachers and show them the ropes of a middle schooler's life. More information will be sent home with families in April.