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K-6 School Counselor
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SDSCA

The mission of the South Dakota School Counselor Association is to unite, support, and empower school counselors.

Our Vision:

The South Dakota School Counselor Association supports and unites school counselors through advocacy, leadership, and collaboration. SDSCA empowers our members through professional development opportunities, ethical support, and resources to promote student success in the academic, career, and social/emotional domains.

Who You Gonna Call...

By: Jeff Heavlin

Hello neighbors!

All of us entered this profession because we want to help young people. Whether kindergarten, sixth grade, right on up through high school and beyond. One of the greatest ways we can do this is through our collaboration and consultation with other stakeholders.

While I certainly enjoy the feeling of truly helping a student one-on-one or when a classroom lesson really seems to be successful, there is a certain joy to be felt (and rightly so) when our insight, expertise, or opinion is purposely sought out. Whether a classroom teacher, administrator, parent, fellow school counselor, or someone else reaches out for your input it helps validate what we do. As school counselors we are often the most experienced and trained person in the building regarding the realm of mental health, but we have so much more to offer.

Our knowledge of interpersonal relationships and communication often makes us valuable resources when it comes to communicating with parents/guardians, providing suggestions for addressing individual student and/or whole class management, and can be crucial when helping plan for meaningful staff development to help our colleagues better understanding students and their situations.

Some of this comes from having the experience and previously demonstrating your “worth” to various stakeholders. However, a decent portion comes from promoting yourself and your program and helping create the opportunities to show what you can add, contribute, provide, and even create.

This month we look at just a few of the ways we can support our staffs and students. Like so many things in life, we are only limited by our imaginations. Use the variety of skills, knowledge, and talents you have to advise, consult, and collaborate. If there’s anyone who knows the value of teamwork, it’s a school counselor!

Have a fantastic month!

Stay Connected with SDSCA:

Website: www.sdsca.weebly.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SDSCounselors



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Danielle Schonebaum

SDSCA Mentoring Chair

K-12 School Counselor
Waverly-South Shore School,
Waverly

Danielle Schonebaum shared this great graphic with ideas for you or your colleagues to help redirect and engage students in the classroom. You can find this and more at *An Ethical Island*, by [clicking here](#).



**ASCA
Annual
Conference**
July 8-11, 2017

Did You Know...

SDSCA members, who attend the 2017 ASCA National Conference in Denver, are eligible to receive a \$100 stipend!

Stipend request forms will be available in Denver.

Making Your ASCA '17 Plans?

If you are on Facebook and are a current member of SDSCA, visit our official group dedicated to helping you get connected with other members traveling to Denver this summer.

[Click here](#) to join!

27 Things to Do with Students who are not paying attention.

Ask

Ask them to repeat what was just said.

Stand

Stand next to them.

Give

Give them the marker and ask them to be the record keeper.

Show

Grab their attention by showing a short film.

Get-up

Get-up and move.

Give

Take a break and give students a problem to solve.

Ask

Ask a challenging question that takes several steps to solve.

MAKE

Have them make something related to the topic.

Find

Find out what excites the student and add a related analogy.

Remove

Remove the distraction.

Remove

Remove the student.

Remove

Remove yourself and take a break.

Place

Place students in groups.

Rules

Let groups put in place rules.

Control

Place students in control of enforcing the rules.

Get

Get the students moving.

Play

Play a game.

Create

Create an incentive for them to pay attention.

Send

Send the students on a field trip.

Research

Send the students to do gather information.

Teach

Have the student teach the lesson.

Assist

Ask the student to assist you.

Music

Ask the student to find relevant music and play it in the background.

Take

Take a quiz.

Move

Move the student.

Reward

Reward students who pay attention.

Ask

Ask why the student is not paying attention

Sometimes it is the students who are bored and sometimes it is the instructor who is boring. Engaged students pay attention.

By: Mia MacMeekin



Dustin Pickrel

SDSCA Graduate Student Liaison

School Counselor

May Overby Elementary School,
Aberdeen

Taming the Testing Beast: Helping Students Overcome Anxiety During Testing Season

By: Dustin Pickrel

It's that time of year again! Baseball season!!...err I mean testing season. The dreaded beast that is state testing. March brings us a false sense of warmer weather, 4 more weeks of winter, and 3 feet of snow. It also brings anxiety and nerves for students taking the Smarter Balanced tests. During this time of year I like to prepare our test takers with tools to help tame the beast. I want to share some of the things I've done and am doing currently to help our students prepare for the test.

During my classroom lessons this year I focused on 10 tips for success. The worksheet is found at <http://www.thenedshow.com/assets/tentestingtips.pdf> and does a great job of breaking down what to do prior to any test. Whether it's creating a game plan for the night before the test, or what to do during the test, we discuss several topics of how to make this time of year as smooth and stress free as humanly possible. Here are the tips: 1.) prepare 2.) go to bed early 3.) eat a healthy breakfast 4.) wear comfortable clothes. So far, those are pretty self-explanatory and the kids usually have great ideas or suggestions of what they currently do. When I get to step 5.) relax! take slow, deep, breaths, I pull up the website www.mindyeti.com and take 3-4 minutes to teach about the power of focusing on our breathing. Often time's students forget that it is OK to stop during the test, put the mouse down, and take 1 minute to recharge your brain. They love mindyeti and it's a useful tool for so many other areas than just testing.

Tip 6 teaches to follow directions and read carefully. For this I use a worksheet from the Classroom Guidance Activities workbook by Joe Wittmer. It's a pretty standard *following directions worksheet* where students are asked to do what the directions say. Most students don't take the time to read the directions carefully and end up doing more work than is needed. They feel like they are tricked, but really it's a matter of comprehending the directions of the test and doing EXACTLY what is being asked.

As we make our way through the final steps of the 10 testing tips we arrive with number 10. This one often goes overlooked, but I challenge the students to reward themselves if they are giving their best effort during the testing week. We even make effort meters to check ourselves during the test. If they feel they've done their best they possibly can, they reward themselves with a fun, relaxing weekend activity.

With all the hard work that is put into testing by so many different people, we cannot forget to stop and pat ourselves on the back for a job well done. As testing season pushes forward and continues to rear its ugly head, take a minute to stop... relax...and breathe.

Mark Your Calendar

- ◆ **March 30th:** Deadline to submit a nomination for the 2017 SDCA Awards ([click here](#) for criteria and procedure)
- ◆ **May 4th:** SDSCA/SDMHCA sponsored Pre-Conference workshop featuring Dr. Julia V. Taylor at the Best Western Ramkota in Sioux Falls ([click here](#) for info)
- ◆ **May 4th-6th:** SDCA Conference at the Best Western Ramkota in Sioux Falls ([click here](#) for info)
- ◆ **June 30th:** 2016-2017 SDSCA and SDCA memberships expire.
- ◆ **July 8th-11th:** ASCA Annual Conference in Denver ([click here](#) for more info)
- ◆ **September 29th:** SDCA Dr. Russell Barkley event in Sioux Falls ([click here](#) to learn more about Dr. Barkley)



Ashley Seeklander

SDSCA Past President

K-8 School Counselor,
Groton Area Schools

Hey Roomie!

By: Ashley Seeklander

Are you ASCA-Denver down and bound? I am! This summer will be my seventh ASCA National Conference. It has now become a tradition to attend and I can't imagine not going. I will be the first to admit that attending a national conference is expensive. Between the registration fee, hotel, transportation, food, and fun, it can quickly add up. However, I have learned one very important money saving options: share.

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School Counselor Spotlight

Jackie Pew- Harvey Dunn Elementary, Sioux Falls; SDSCA Special Projects Chair



How long have you been a school counselor? : 13 years

What do you see as the biggest issues currently facing school counselors?: 1) Increasing number of children entering our doors with very limited social/emotional skills and increasing mental health needs 2) Increased number of parents who lack parenting skills 3) Increased stressful working conditions due to unrealistic caseloads/work demands

What advice would you give to anyone new to the school counseling profession?:

You might not see the difference you are making immediately, but you are making a difference. Remember to take care of yourself so you can take care of others.

Have you ever attended an ASCA National Conference?:

I attended the ASCA national conference in Minneapolis. The conference was an awesome learning experience. There is nothing better than meeting and listening to the authors of curriculum material you use in groups and classrooms. I met amazing people who truly understand what I do and deal with every day.

Amy Reyes– Yankton High School

How long have you been a school counselor?: This is my 3rd year

Why do you enjoy being a school counselor?: The best part about my job is being able to advocate for my students. I enjoy helping students discover their strengths and use those strengths to set and achieve goals and overcome obstacles that stand in their way. I consider it a true privilege to be able to work with high school students at this critical junction in their lives as they map out their future and discover they have the power to author their own story.

What advice would you give to anyone new to the school counseling profession?: I would advise them to network with other counselors and to never be afraid to ask for help when they need it. I am incredibly fortunate to have some wonderful mentors who I have met through classes, practicum/internship, employment, conferences, and other events who are always willing to offer advice or simply listen. These people have helped me so much in figuring out what it means to be a school counselor, who I am as a counselor, and how I can best work with the students I serve. We have wonderful resources through ASCA, SDCA, SDSCA, and our local chapters and we need to utilize these resources to support and empower one another!

Who are your inspirations or role models?: My role model has always been and will always be my dad. Despite working two jobs, he never missed a band concert, choir performance, drama production, or Saturday night church with the family. He taught me the importance of making time for faith and family, and always remembering the truly important things in life.



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Sharing Good News

If you have good news to share about you, your colleagues, your program, or other information you'd like us to know, please send it to sd.schoolcounselors@gmail.com (along with pictures if you have them!)

Coming Next Month...

Our ASCA partnered newsletter takes a look at College and Career preparation from kindergarten through high school.

School Counselor Spotlight con't



Julie Nelson- Southwest Middle School, Rapid City

How long have you been a school counselor? : 12 years

What do you see as the biggest issues currently facing school counselors?: Our ratios impacting our ability to do meaningful work with students and implement comprehensive school counseling plans is a struggle.

What advice would you give to anyone new to the school counseling profession?:

Ask for help, recognize your limitations to avoid burnout, join your professional organizations (local chapter, state association, national association) to network & grow!

Is there anything else about you, your program, or experience that you'd like us to know?:

I voluntarily left a comfortable position to step outside my comfort zone to learn and grow (elementary school counseling to middle level; new district). It took 10 years to decide to do this! I'm confident we grow when we do this but it takes courage to do this!

Katie Murdy- Brandon Valley High School

How long have you been a school counselor?: 6 years

Why do you enjoy being a school counselor?: Every day is different. I enjoy working with students, their families, and staff to help the student be successful. Success looks differently for each student and it is fun building a relationship and helping students find their own meaning to success.

What advice would you give to anyone new to the school counseling profession?: Whether you are in a big school or small school, find another school counselor to connect with. Meet with them to exchange ideas or to help you work through tough days. Self care is key! Attend all the workshops and conferences you can and take notes! Start a "bad day" file with notes from students and families to take out and read on those bad days.

If you weren't a school counselor, what other vocation would you like to me i?: When I was in middle school, I wanted to be a chef. I love to cook and try new recipes or create my own recipes.



Hey Roomie con't

Being a person who is little more adventurous I cut my hotel costs in half, and one year by a third, simply sharing a hotel room. All three times that I have shared a room have been with complete strangers. Yes, it sounds scary because you don't know these people at all. However, I figure that if they are a school counselor they can't be a serial killer too. What school counselor would have time to be both a serial killer and a school counselor?!

I was able to connect with other school counselors looking to share a room through the ASCA Scene- which is an on-line forum that other ASCA members can share resources, information, and post questions. It's one of the many great perks of having an ASCA membership. Last summer, I was able to find a roommate through the Entire Elementary and Caught in the Middle School Facebook groups. Aside from the saving money part, I made some really amazing connections that I would have never been able to do otherwise.

With ASCA's conference being so close this year you have an advantage of finding a roommate from your own state. Don't be afraid to use the SDSCA Counselor listserv to help save yourself (or your school district) some money. SDSCA has also started a separate Facebook group: SDSCA-ASCA Trip 2017. All you have to do is request to join.

See you in Denver!

Share Your Self-Care Story

Researchers right here in South Dakota want to know more about the self-care practices school counselors take part in. This team hopes to use survey data to help other school counselors build their resiliency and reduce compassion fatigue and workplace burnout. If you would be willing to participate in the survey or would like more information, [please click here](#). Thank you!

