

Academic Achievement Initiatives for Elementary School Counselors

Maria Grovner

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Data

- Ensuring academic achievement for every student includes counselor initiated activities designed to meet the needs of under-served, under-performing and under-represented populations.
- What are some of your current data sources?
- What am I already doing that can be measured?
- START SMALL and use that data to support further expansion and change

Academic Support Groups



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- To develop skills to increase academic success
- Students who need supplemental instruction on strategies to use in the classroom to help them focus, prepare and get on track to learn.
- Not highly disruptive and do not have severe learning concerns
- Not performing as well as they could on classroom assignments or statewide tests.

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Study Skills...It begins in elementary...



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- Core Curriculum Lessons
- Small Groups for Targeted Students
- Provide teachers with follow up discussion pointers to reinforce what you covered with students
- Something tangible for the students
- Provide a parent letter for students to take home discussing strategies you discussed with students.
- Study Skills Tip of the Day (encourage students to show you that they implemented the tip)
- If doing a small group on study skills, consider providing each student with a study skills success pack

Academic Clubs

Types of Clubs

- Homework Club/Peer Tutoring
- Reading Club
- STEM Club
- Math Matters
- Superheroes (in history)
- World Language Club

Counselor Involvement

- Refer Students
- Communicate with parents a club that you think might be beneficial for their child
- Offer to do a presentation at one of the club meetings based on type of club
- Secure guest speakers for the clubs

Communication



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Consultations

- **Kid Talk:** A time for you to meet with grade level teachers during their planning about concerns they may have for their students and develop some sort of action plan. Make it a point to follow up with the teacher after you have done your method of intervention.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Try to attend as many as your schedule will allow...especially for those students who may be experiencing academic difficulty. What can you offer to do to support the student?
- **Collaboration:** Consult with your school's instructional coaches and technology coach on how you all can support each other for the good of the school.

Parental Involvement

- Good News Phone Calls/ Postcards
- Pick a grade level each nine weeks to write letters to students about something special they achieved (honor roll, student of the month, improved choices, etc.)
- Parent consultation
- Parent education classes that teach parents how to support their children in schools
- Advocate for parents and students during meetings
- Help to keep the parents of children who are having difficulty in school apprised of their children's progress by encouraging teachers to communicate more frequently with parents than once per grading period

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Suggested Activities



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School

- Develop an early warning system for students having academic and/or behavioral difficulty to ensure early interventions.
- Advocate to have the students most in need placed with the strongest teachers in each grade level.
- Participate on school leadership teams and use data to inform recommendations for improving student learning, outcomes and expectations.
- Review procedures related to how students are selected for programs, including gifted and talented and other special academic programs.



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School

- Collaborate with teachers and administrators to:
 - broaden social and cultural knowledge by building learning communities that are focused on connectedness to school, civic responsibility, national issues and global mindedness. Use new vocabulary words, literacy and numeracy skills to promote proficiency.
 - develop early warning programs and safety nets for students experiencing academic difficulty. SLDS is a great tool to use. This work is especially important for third-graders.
 - develop a positive culture and climate around assessments — one that reduces test anxiety, encourages good studying and test-taking skills, and lays a foundation for continued college and career assessments. Pay special attention to students who seem hesitant about assessments as tools to help them.



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Parents & Families

- Create school and community events for parents and families in which they learn how to help their children develop positive engagement in school and build high aspirations.
- Encourage parents to cultivate their children's interests by paying close attention to their activities during non-school time and talking with their children about how their interests are related to school success and career opportunities.
- Teach parents and families how to support their children academically, help them engage in school, chart their knowledge and skill development, and encourage social interactions that lay the foundation for college and career readiness.
- Give parents and families academic planning information for middle school to assist in both short and long-range academic planning for their children.
- Assist parents and families in locating free and low-cost academic, enrichment and extracurricular programs that provide opportunities for students to receive praise, encouragement and guidance.

Parents & Families

- Help parents and families learn how to:
 - develop academic and activity calendars and use portfolios to highlight student accomplishments.
 - create a positive home environment that helps students plan for assessments while reducing test anxiety, encouraging positive engagement and highlighting students' strengths.
 - to locate resources (e.g., assistance with academic and behavioral issues such as absenteeism).



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Students

- Connect students who have high tardiness, absences and discipline referrals to potential mentors, including more successful peers, high school students, and at least one adult in the school and/or community, to increase their connectedness to school through meaningful relationships.
- Help students learn how to successfully begin their kindergarten experience by building knowledge and skills to master their new learning and social environment.
- Provide opportunities to build literacy, numeracy and writing skills when presenting college and career awareness information.
- Create early awareness that connects academic performance (e.g., doing homework), coming to school on time, and habits as a learner (e.g., being helpful, having a positive attitude, listening and communicating) to getting better grades and attaining grade-level promotion.

Students



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- For grades 3–5, help students identify their learning styles; focus on students who struggle to use their learning style as an asset.
- Help students explore their areas of interest and link their strengths to academic subjects.
- Use college and career content to develop activities and assignments that promote good learning habits with targeted opportunities for students who are most in need and least engaged in school.
- Help students develop and build portfolios, including certificates, awards and work samples that highlight enrichment and extracurricular participation and success.
- Help fifth-grade students begin to plan a program of study for middle school, paying special attention to English, math, science and magnet programs.

Lunch Bunch

- Who:
 - Students with minor peer-related concerns
 - Friendship Issues
 - Conflict Issues
 - Newcomers
 - General Check-In
- What:
 - Lunch with the counselor
 - Systematic discussions
- When:
 - Students' lunch period
 - One or two visits per issue (or more, if needed)



Attendance

- Morning Reminder notes
- "Missed You" notes
- One Personal Note
- Group Incentives ("Brownie Points")
- Individual Incentives (puzzle pieces, graphing progress)



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Family Nights

Academic Nights

- STEM Night
- Math Night
- Literacy Night
- Movie Night

Suggested Activities

- During breakout session or table session, do a presentation on ___subject___ related careers
- Some movies that have counseling related themes, provide parent with a discussion guide they can use to encourage communication with their child.

For the underachiever...



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- Does the student need a hearing, vision and medical examination?
- Encourage parents to maintain regular (at least weekly) communication with teachers to help the student remain organized and keep up with assignments.
- Set short and long term goals.
- Discuss student's negative attitude toward school. Focus on changing that attitude.
- Ensure the student has the skills required to complete schoolwork. If not, try to assist in changing the level of the student's work or direct parents to tutoring resources.

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Additional Strategies



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- Direct the student to write the assignment for the day and have the teacher initialize it. Parents expect to see the notebook everyday even if there is no assignment. The student should write no assignment and the teacher still initializes it.
- Teach test-taking skills.
- Teach the student effective study skills (study in quiet places, develop outlines, highlight important details, etc.).
- Monitor academic progress. Discuss accomplishments and setbacks.
- Direct student to use planners to record school assignments and plan ahead for long-term projects.
- Encourage parents to give praise and positive reinforcements for academic success

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All Levels

8

**Best Practices for
Themed
Days/Weeks/Months**

Presentation Time:
2:00 PM

Elementary

7

**ASCAs Mindsets and
Behaviors for Your Core
Curriculum Lessons
(for new school counselors)**

Presentation Time:
2:00 PM

27

**Value Added Career
Activities**

Presentation Time:
11:00 AM

Middle

7

**ASCAs Mindsets
and Behaviors for
Your Core
Curriculum Lessons
(for new school
counselors)**

Presentation Time:
2:00 PM

High

27

**Spicing Up Your
College
Counseling
Initiatives**

Presentation Time:
2:00 PM

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