

# Academic Achievement Initiatives for Middle School Counselors

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# Data



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Georgia's School Superintendent  
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- 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 are you already doing that can be measured?
- START SMALL and use that data to support further expansion and change
- SCHOOL DATA PROFILE

# 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



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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
- [Small Group Study Skills Unit](#)

# Check Ups

- Get a report every three weeks from data person or teachers on students' progress
- Meet with students who are not being academically successful based on your system's promotion criteria
- If homework is an issue, have them bring their HW by your office the following morning when they arrive
- Incentive for improved performance
- [Goal Setting Worksheets](#)
- [Short and Long Term Goals](#)

# Academic Clubs

## Types of Clubs

- Homework Club/Peer Tutoring
- Reading Club
- STEM Club
- Math Matters
- 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 other special academic programs.



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# School

- Collaborate with teachers and administrators to:
  - develop early warning programs and safety nets for students experiencing academic difficulty. SLDS is a great tool to use.
  - 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.
- 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.
- Engage parents in meaningful ways in school activities by finding out their expertise and applying towards whatever the school needs.

# Students



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- 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.
- In grade 6, help students identify their learning styles; focus on students who struggle to use their learning style as an asset.
- 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.
- Help students explore their areas of interest and link their strengths to academic subjects.

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# Students



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- 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 8<sup>th</sup> graders plan a program of study for high school, paying special attention to English, math, science and career related courses

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# Chat & Chew



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## Typical 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)

## Working Lunch

- Who:
  - Student who have multiple missing assignments
  - Students who have been absent recently
- What:
  - Lunch with the counselor
  - Complete Missing Work
- When:
  - Students' lunch period

# Breakfast Club

- Students identified by content area teacher
- Student leaders serve as tutors
- Eat breakfast
- Students rotate from one skill to another skill
- At each skill station they work on practice problems, then the student leader reviews the answers and provides further explanations.
- Usually held the morning of the standardized testing.



# Attendance

- “Missed You” notes
- One Personal Note
- Group Incentives (“Brownie Points”)
- Individual Incentives (puzzle pieces, graphing progress)
- [Other Attendance Incentives](#)

# 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.

# Additional Strategies



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- Direct the student to write the assignment for the day and have the teacher initial it. Parents expect to see the notebook everyday even if there is no assignment. The student should write no assignment and the teacher still initial it.
- Teach/Review 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.



# FEBRUARY WEBINARS

To register, click the webinar's title.

Feb. 17:

Elementary Counselors

Using Art in Your School Counseling Program

2:00 PM

Feb. 24:

Middle School Counselors

Empower & Inspire to Avoid the Drama

11:00 AM

Feb. 24:

College Entrance Exams Resources for Your Students

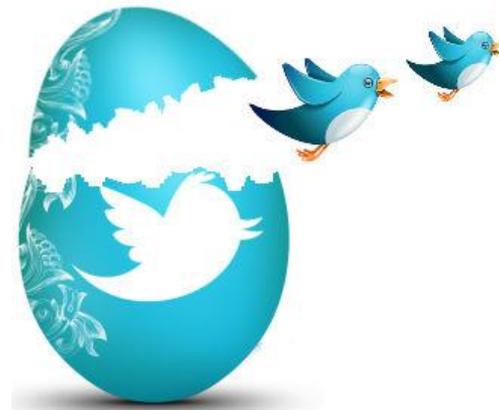
2:00 PM



# Look what's "hatching" at GaDOE for School Counselors...



- Follow us on Twitter to receive timely updates and counseling related links in an effort to keep you informed.
- @gadoecounselors



The image features a stylized logo for 'THE FEND'. The text is rendered in a bold, pink, blocky font with a thick black outline and a white inner border. The letters are arranged in two rows: 'THE' on top and 'FEND' on the bottom. The logo is centered within a large, multi-layered heart shape. The heart has a red outer border and a pink inner fill. The background is filled with numerous small, yellow, five-pointed stars scattered across the pink and red areas.

**THE  
FEND**