

# COUNSELOR CONNECTIONS

November/December 2015 • NYC Department of Education — Office of Guidance and School Counseling

Mayoral Photography Office



## Guidance Lessons

By [Michael Battista](#)

Senior Administrator,

Office of Guidance and School Counseling

Guidance lessons are an important tool in providing a comprehensive guidance and school counseling program. Guidance lessons should have a scope and sequence for each grade and address the three domains of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA): academic planning, social-emotional development, and post-secondary planning.

### Planning

- ▶ Each September, plan out your school's guidance lessons for the school year. Ensure the sequence of lessons incorporates ASCA's three domains. Refer to the [ASCA National Standards for Students](#).
  - ▶ Use team meetings (e.g., guidance teams, teacher grade teams, or common planning time meetings) to develop your school's guidance lessons.
  - ▶ Generate a [STARS Master Schedule report](#) in Excel to help determine the schedule of guidance lessons.
- ▶ Prepare a formal schedule for the series of guidance lessons in advance. Get input from school administrators and teachers on planning your schedule.
  - ▶ Provide administrators and teachers with a copy of the final schedule along with a memo on the aim of your lesson(s). Maintain copies of the schedule and related memos as evidence of your work.

### Lesson Features

- ▶ Make the aim of the lesson clear. Elicit the aim during the guidance lesson during.
- ▶ Build student engagement into the mini-lesson and all related activities.
- ▶ Help promote accountable talk by ensuring that students empathize with and piggyback off each other's comments. Encourage dialogue between class members, not just between the facilitator and students.
- ▶ Use guidance lessons as an opportunity to increase counselor visibility and to promote school programs.

- ▶ Ensure that all school counseling activities draw connections back to student achievement and success in reaching long-term goals.

### Support and Resources

- ▶ Serve as a coach to your teacher advisors and encourage them to turnkey lessons.

- ▶ Use the [Guidance Resources](#) available at the Principals' Portal to help prepare or enhance your school's guidance lessons.
- ▶ Consult with your [Field Support Center School Counseling Manager](#) on your plans for guidance lessons throughout the school year.

## Message from the Executive Director: Take Time to Take

### Dear School Counselors, Social Workers, and SAPIS Counselors,

There is something about being a school counselor or social worker that elicits both deep respect and profound confusion among people who don't work in these fields. Some say, "I don't know how you do it all day. How do you listen to people's problems?" Others remark, "I have so much respect for what you do. Thank goodness for people like you."

A more important question may be, when you go home at the end of the day and look in the mirror, do you see a sense of accomplishment or a feeling of exhaustion staring back at you? Perhaps a little of both?

This month, as we examine guidance lessons and the importance of social-emotional learning, let us also think about our own social-emotional needs. Most of us are familiar with the term *wellness*. In our personal lives, wellness is akin to putting the oxygen mask on ourselves before helping a child, as on an airplane. We must take the same approach to our professional lives. We are no good to anyone else if we don't first supply ourselves with what we need to sustain work that requires so much heart, soul, intellect, and energy.

I speak from personal experience. This school year, I began to feel exhausted and wondered, what drives counselors to the point of physical or social-emotional negligence? Are we martyrs who put ourselves last, or superheroes who believe we are omnipotent and not in need of the basic self-care we recommend to others?

So, my guidance lesson in this message is one I need reminding of as well. The lesson is self-care. With all of the giving that we do every day, it's important to take time to take. Here are some self-care strategies that have worked for me:

- ▶ **Take a lunch.** No matter how busy you are or how much you think everyone around you needs you, take your lunch. You need food, you need water. You need to feed yourself physically to best feed those around you emotionally and academically.
- ▶ **Take a look.** Take a look around you and identify your stressors. Take a look also at yourself and appreciate your efforts, recognizing your strengths as well as the areas where you can improve.
- ▶ **Take heart.** Remember that you are growing personally and professionally. Although you may not get the recognition you crave, you are making a difference. Do not be discouraged when outcomes are not as you desired. At the very least, you are impacting students and colleagues by your attention, your presence, and your efforts.
- ▶ **Take care of yourself.** Do not collapse under the pressure.

Ongoing self-care will help all of us continue to give our personal best. By being a model of self-care, we help our youngsters, family members, and colleagues to thrive.

**Jaye Murray, SBL, LSCW**

Executive Director

Office of Guidance and School Counseling

# SPECIAL FEATURE: Coro New York Leadership Academies

By [Cheryl Hall](#)

Senior Administrator, Office of Guidance and School Counseling,  
and Cynthia Wong and Staci Taustine,  
Coro New York Leadership Center

## Youth Leadership Academy

The citywide pilot of the **Youth Leadership Academy (YLA)** proved to be an extraordinary success for students across New York City this summer. The YLA was launched in 2014 with Brooklyn South through a unique partnership between the New York City Department of Education and [Coro New York Leadership Center](#). The program brought together dozens of students representing six Borough Student Advisory Councils (BSACs) for two weeks of intensive leadership skills, development, and community-building. Student participants gained a deeper understanding of the New York City public school system, and their own role as peer representatives and change agents.

Held at Stuyvesant High School in lower Manhattan, the YLA engaged the cohort in a range of experiential learning activities aimed at expanding participants' awareness of diverse perspectives, the structure of the DOE, and their role in supporting educational success for themselves and their peers. At the close of the summer session, participants left united in their commitment to bring greater youth voice to DOE policy discussions and decisions. One student described his BSAC role as "a way not only to use our voice, but our



ears to advocate...so that we can improve our communities."

## Adult Training Academy

The YLA program also included a three-day **Adult Training Academy (ATA)** in mid-July. Substance abuse prevention and intervention services counselors and newly hired field support center school climate managers joined forces to focus on strategies to partner with youth participants to build stronger BSACs across the City. The Adult Training Academy is an ideal professional development opportunity for school-based coordinators of student activities or student government moderators.

Coro will continue providing training and technical assistance to the YLA and ATA throughout the school year to strengthen the capacity of BSAC adult and youth leaders to work together on key policy issues calling for critical student voice.

*For more information on upcoming Coro New York Leadership Academy trainings, contact your [field support center school climate manager](#).*

## STAY INFORMED!

*For comprehensive school counseling resources, please visit the Guidance Portal at: [schools.nyc.gov/Teachers/guidance](https://schools.nyc.gov/Teachers/guidance)*



# Elementary Schools: Guidance Lessons

By [Cheryl Hall](#)

Senior Administrator,

Office of Guidance and School Counseling

Guidance lessons can be a vital service for elementary schools. Elementary school students and their families often reach out to the school counselor for guidance and advocacy. Many middle childhood students face personal and developmental challenges which are unique to this stage of life. Some students are faced with complex social issues and depend on the adults in the school community to provide safety and protection, as well as to help them meet educational and developmental milestones. Elementary school is the perfect opportunity to proactively remove barriers to learning and to promote academic achievement.

## Comprehensive Guidance and School Counseling Programs

Unfortunately, without a requirement for elementary school counselors in the New York State Education Department's regulations, many schools have just one counselor, one social worker, or even share a school counselor with other schools. The elementary school counselor is an integral part of the school community, and the need for a comprehensive guidance and school counseling plan is essential in meeting the developmental needs of all students. This plan includes the delivery of guidance lessons that help students to build skills and increase their understanding of academic success. A comprehensive guidance and school counseling plan also allows for close collaboration between counseling staff and classroom teachers, which helps to provide opportunities for early identification and intervention of potential issues. Classroom guidance interventions offer the school counselor greater visibility, increased contact with more students, and enhanced collaborations with teachers.

## Initial Visits

The beginning of the school year is the best time to conduct your initial visits to classrooms. Visiting classrooms will help you to introduce or re-introduce

yourself to your students. Consider your initial visits as an opportunity for an "infomercial" on the services and programs the guidance office will offer this school year. Use your first visits to inform your planning for a strategic schedule of guidance lessons.

## Selecting Topics

The topics for guidance lessons can be generated using the issues and concerns addressed in the previous school year's plan. Guidance lessons can be based on the needs of target populations or on a survey of students, parents, or teachers. When there is collaboration in the planning and implementation of guidance lessons, then selected topics can be easily infused into the subject area lessons, which can be stand alone or part of a unit. The mission and vision statement of the school and guidance office should be reflected in the delivery of services.

Lessons should cover the three domains of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model, and should have a scope and sequence for all grade levels. Example of topics that could be covered include:

- ▶ **Academic Planning:** grade level expectations; promotional policies (e.g., [Chancellor's Regulation A-501](#)); test anxiety ; being prepared; Middle School Choice; middle school transitions .
- ▶ **Social-Emotional Development:** understanding self and others; identifying and managing feelings; interacting with others and developing socialization skills; making positive choices; and building character.
- ▶ **Post-Secondary Planning:** community resources and service opportunities; leadership skills; the relationship of school responsibilities to the world of work; career exploration; a culminating Career Day event.

Please share your guidance lesson success stories by emailing [guidance@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:guidance@schools.nyc.gov).

# Empowering Our Students and Families with Quick Response Codes

By [Zuri Jackson-Woods](#)

Senior Administrator for Middle Schools,  
Office of Guidance and School Counseling



As mentioned in previous editions of *Counselor Connections*, [Pinterest](#) is an excellent resource for finding creative, innovative ideas. As an example, Pinterest provided [these photos](#) of how schools have used Quick Response (QR) codes. QR codes can be placed in a counselor's vestibule for

parents, family members, students, and visitors who are interested in receiving additional information about your school's comprehensive guidance and school counseling program, upcoming guidance lessons by grade level, and available community resources. Using QR codes can be an effective strategy for student and parent orientations (e.g., *Meet the School Counselor/Social Worker Day*), for ongoing career and postsecondary planning activities, and for events throughout the school year.



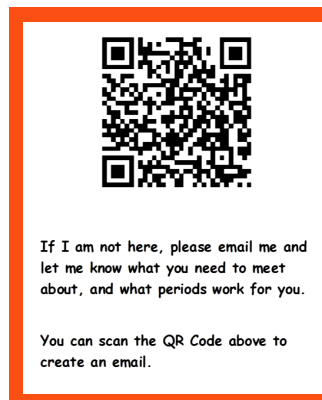
## QR Codes for Guidance Lessons

We can lead our students and families directly to information through their iPad's or mobile device's scanner. For example, the QR codes in the following photo link directly to websites that feature free curriculum for guidance lessons:

- ▶ [Dove Self Esteem Toolkit for Students and Parents](#)
- ▶ [Medal of Honor: Lessons of Personal Bravery and Self-Sacrifice Character Development Program](#)
- ▶ [National Association for College Admissions Counseling's Step by Step College Awareness curricula](#)
- ▶ [Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Curriculum](#)
- ▶ [Hance Family Foundation Beautiful Me](#)



## How Do I Create a QR Code?



You can create QR codes for important phone numbers, contact information, and websites through [QR Code Generator](#). The application also allows you to generate a code that will send a free text. There is an option for you to save your QR codes and upload them later.

## Voice Activated QR Code

You can create a QR Code that speaks with the application [QR Voice](#). You simply type in your message and the app generates a code—and lets you select a variety of playback languages. You can use a voice activated QR



code to remind students about guidance lesson topics for the month, goals, deadlines, and more. If you have a QR reader application (e.g., QR Reader) on your mobile device, you can listen to a sample message by scanning the code in the blue box above.

For my direct contact information, scan this QR code.



# High School Guidance Lesson Planning

By [Margarita Suero-Duran](#), Ed. D.  
Senior Administrator for High Schools,  
Office of Guidance and School Counseling.

To strategically engage in lesson planning, school counselors adapt appropriate existing guidance curricula to meet the academic, social-emotional, and career development needs of the students being served. At the high school level, for instance, essential lessons presented on an ongoing basis help students understand graduation requirements, develop de-stressing strategies, and engage in college and career planning.

As permitted by the school counselor caseload assignment and weekly schedule, delivery of guidance lessons may be facilitated via a “push-in” model where the counselor collaborates with the teacher to visit the classroom. However, depending on school size and established structures (e.g., advisories), K-12 guidance lessons are often facilitated by the classroom teacher or other appropriate educators, in consultation with the school counselor. Educators may also integrate guidance activities across academic content area lessons.

An effective guidance lesson plan may document the activity title, proper citation of the source, name of the school counselor, name of the classroom teacher, name of the department administrator, classroom location, grade level, target population, date, and duration of the activity. More substantially, ASCA (2012, p.55) recommends including:

- ▶ **Learning Standards**—Begin by identifying the ASCA domains and [ASCA National Standards for Students](#), and the competencies from the [ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success](#) to be addressed. Counselors are also encouraged to align the lesson with other current student learning standards such as the [New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies Standards](#), the [New York City Department of Education Postsecondary Readiness Benchmarks](#), and the [Common Core](#).
- ▶ **Learning Objective(s)**—Identify clear, measurable learning objectives related to the lesson standards.
- ▶ **Resources**—List any materials and other resources needed for delivery of the lesson (e.g. audio/visual equipment; handouts; presentation documents; props; guest presenters; websites; title of book, song, poem or video clip; etc.)
- ▶ **Procedure**—Indicate, step-by step, what the facilitator(s) and the students will do:
  - ◊ Clearly and creatively introduce the lesson
  - ◊ Present the lesson content and engage students
  - ◊ End with an activity to check for student understanding
- ▶ **Evaluation**—As feasible, plan for identifying impact on students via collection of process data (who will participate), perception data (pre- and post-lesson surveys, verbal feedback from students and adults, tangible student artifacts, etc.), and outcome data (targeted attendance, behavior or academic data).
- ▶ **Follow-up**—Indicate any activities that will complement or reinforce what students have learned.

Whether developing a scope and sequence based on lessons adapted from “packaged” or commercial guidance curricula or from the range of web-based educational forums, counselors in all grade levels can outline each individual lesson using the basic lesson plan components proposed in the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012). Documenting and reflecting upon ASCA’s basic lesson components will help counselors remain intentional and transparent about “what will be delivered, to whom it will be delivered, how it will be delivered and how student attainment of the competencies will be evaluated” (p. 55).

## Reference:

- ◆ American School Counselor Association (2012). *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*, Third Edition. Alexandria, VA.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU ICEBREAKER

Start by writing two things about yourself that your group members or classmates may not know. Your responses will then be collected. You and your group members/classmates will then guess who wrote these two items.

Two items my group members or classmates may not know about me:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Discussion Questions:

- ▶ What did you learn about your group members or classmates from this activity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ▶ Have you noticed similarities between your group members or classmates that you were not previously aware of?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ▶ How can personal knowledge about your classmates help to support success in school and in life?

*This activity meets [American School Counselor Association \(ASCA\) National Standards for Students:](#)*

- ◆ **PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge** (PS:A1.10 Identify strengths and assets.)

*This activity also meets [ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success:](#)*

- ◆ **Category 2: Behavior Standards** (Social Skills: 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with other students.)

Developed by Cheryl Hall and Michael Battista, Senior Administrators, NYC DOE Office of Guidance and School Counseling.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT

## *High School Admissions Updates*

Thank you to all guidance counselors who attended our high school admissions workshops early this fall. For those who were unable to attend, please review the presentation now available in [SEMS](#). Here are important dates to remember:

### **High School Admissions Application Submission**

#### *Applications due December 1*

Guidance counselors for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and first-time 9<sup>th</sup> grade students submitting high school applications should continue to help students and families make informed choices by:

- ▶ Understanding admissions methods and admissions priorities
- ▶ Diversifying their application lists, including adding a mix of admissions methods and program selectivity for their 12 choices
- ▶ Comparing student academic data with screened and audition program selection criteria
- ▶ Adding additional programs of interest to applications
- ▶ Attending information sessions, especially for Limited Unscreened programs
- ▶ Participating in auditions and interviews, if necessary

*Resources:*

- ◆ [2015 Summer Family Workshop](#)

## [Presentation—Introduction to High School Admissions](#)

- ◆ [New York City High School Directory](#)
- ◆ [Information Session Calendar](#)

### **High School Admissions SEMS Data Entry**

#### *December 1–Early January*

Guidance counselors must enter all application choices in SEMS. Remember, Specialized High Schools should not be included as one of the 12 program choices. Please review the Applicant Submission List (ASL) training located in SEMS Resources for step-by-step instructions on entering application choices. This time period also allows you to follow up with students who have not submitted an application or have submitted a low number of program choices. Finally, please remember that [Chancellor's Regulation A-820](#) states that paper applications must be retained for six years. Families should also keep a copy of the application, in addition to the SEMS application receipt.

*Resources: ASL Training for Public Schools in SEMS*

*For questions on high school admissions, please email [HS\\_Enrollment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:HS_Enrollment@schools.nyc.gov).*





# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC POLICY AND SYSTEMS

## NYC Schools Account for Parents and Guardians

Beginning June 8, the DOE began offering parents and guardians a new way to access key information about their children. By registering for an online [NYC Schools](#) account, parents and guardians of students in grades K-12 are now able to review their children's recent attendance, report card grades, and contact information in one of 10 languages from any Internet-ready device. This important tool can support your work by affording families easy access to information about their children's progress through school.

### Data Features

Currently, NYC Schools accounts display the following information:

- ◆ *Assessment*—New York State math and English Language Arts (ELA) test scores and/or Regents exam scores.
- ◆ *Attendance*—Attendance for the current school year, including the number of days the student was late or absent.
- ◆ *Grades*—Report card grades and any teacher comments for each marking period in the current school year.
- ◆ *Schedule*—Course schedule for middle and high school students.
- ◆ *Student Profile*—Contact information on file at your school for both parent and student.

The ability to highlight this information for parents in real time will enable you to have more effective conversations about attendance issues and locate areas of concern within the student's academic program. Additionally, the student profile section of the account will enable parents to update their contact information, which will ensure smooth communication between parents and counselors.

### Helping Families with Access

Counselors should encourage all families to sign up for an NYC Schools account to facilitate more informed conversations about their children's progress. Only a parent or legal guardian who lives at the same address as the student can create an account. If a parent or guardian has more than one child attending a NYC school, he or she can link them all to the same NYC Schools account. Families can register for a NYC Schools account in two ways:

- ◆ Use the Account Creation Code provided in the letter backpacked home from the school; OR
- ◆ Visit the school in person to receive a temporary password.

Your principal may designate access in [myGalaxy](#), allowing you to create accounts for parents via the [Family Access Management \(FAM\)](#) tool when they visit your school.

### Further Assistance

*If parents need more assistance or have questions about navigating their account, direct them to call 311. For additional parent resources, visit the [NYC Schools website](#).*



## FEATURED PROFESSIONAL ARTICLE

Spotlighted by Margarita Suero-Duran, Ed.D.,  
Senior Administrator, Office of Guidance and School Counseling

Quarto, C.J. (2007). [Managing student behavior during large group guidance: What works best?](#)  
*Journal of School Counseling* 5(7).

This paper discusses positive strategies for addressing students' off-task or disruptive behavior during large-group guidance lessons, including the use of:

- ▶ Direct verbal techniques (e.g., gently reminding the group to cooperate and attend to the presentation)
- ▶ Indirect verbal techniques (e.g., reorienting a disruptive student by asking him or her a question)
- ▶ Non-verbal techniques (e.g., making eye contact, using proximity, etc.)

The school counselors who participated in this study said that observational learning—"watching teachers or school counselors utilize these techniques while they taught lessons"—was the most effective way to learn classroom management techniques (p.13).

Which classroom management techniques have been most effective in your practice? What strategies have helped you learn and strengthen your practice? Please share your expertise with Dr. Suero-Duran at [msuerod@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:msuerod@schools.nyc.gov), or submit your guidance success story at [guidance@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:guidance@schools.nyc.gov).

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ [The ASCA National Model](#) was introduced to move school counseling from a responsive service for some students to a comprehensive program for every student. The four overarching components of the model are: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability.
- ▶ [The ASCA National Standards for Students](#) continue to serve as a foundation for the ASCA National Model, incorporating the three interrelated school counseling domains of academic, personal-social, and career development.
- ▶ The National Association of Social Workers offers the [NASW Standards for School Social Work Services](#), which focuses on education and school reform, social justice, and multitier interventions.
- ▶ Delivery of classroom guidance activities ensures ALL students benefit from the school counseling program. One of the first steps counselors can take when planning for a classroom guidance activity is to determine which of the recently developed [ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors](#) will best meet students' needs. Learn more about ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success [here](#).

## Nominate a Teacher in Your School Community

The *Big Apple Awards: Recognizing Teacher Excellence in New York City* celebrate educators across the City and honor teachers who inspire students, model great teaching, and enrich their school communities.



School communities, including students, families, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community members are invited to nominate a teacher by completing a nomination form on the [Big Apple Awards website](#). This year, the DOE is especially interested in recognizing teachers in critical grades and subjects including grades 2, 7, and 10, as well as teachers of special education and English Language Learners.

Nominees must be current, full-time public school teachers who demonstrate exceptional success in impacting student learning, in their instructional practices, and in their professional contributions to their school community.

The *Big Apple Award* recipients will spend the 2016-17 school year on the Chancellor's Teacher Advisory Group and work together to develop their leadership skills in a cohort setting, while continuing to be key leaders in their classrooms and schools.

The nomination deadline is Monday, January 18, 2016. For more information about the *Big Apple Awards*, please visit the [Big Apple Awards](#).



### SPREAD THE POSITIVITY

By scanning this QR Code, you can receive [positive affirmations](#) from the Office of Guidance and School Counseling. Share the QR code with your students to help inspire them with positive messages.

## Share Your Guidance Success Story

*Do you have a guidance success story that you would like to share with your colleagues?*

Please email submissions to [guidance@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:guidance@schools.nyc.gov).

*A success story could feature:*

- ▶ An individual student who made a significant turnaround or achieved his or her fullest potential through the efforts of a school-based counselor
- ▶ A school-wide guidance intervention that was noteworthy in its effectiveness on impacting student attendance, behavior, and/or course marks (the A, B, Cs)
- ▶ An impactful group counseling activity or guidance lesson that students enjoyed

*School-based counselors, social workers, and SAPIS counselors whose submissions are published will be invited to a special lunch with Lois Herrera, chief executive officer of the Office of Safety and Youth Development, at the end of the school year.*

