
Recession-Proof School Counseling: Strategies During Uncertain Times

welcome

A Community Chat with Lisa De Gregorio and
Kirsten Perry

Meet The Presenters



Lisa De Gregorio

Director of Operations, Hatching Results

- Co-author of *Hatching Results for Elementary School Counseling* (2018)
- Former Lead K-8 School Counseling Specialist, Chicago Public Schools
- Former Board Member, Illinois School Counselor Association
- Former Elementary (K-8) School Counselor, Chicago Public Schools

Kirsten Perry

SEL Specialist, Chicago Public Schools

- President-Elect, Illinois School Counselor Association
- Former K-12 School Counseling Specialist, Chicago Public Schools
- Former Elementary School Counselor, Chicago Public Schools
- 2018 National School Counselor of the Year

Disclaimer: Do Not Panic!

Having been a school counselor previously and in my work nationally, this article was written as a call to action now so that school counselors can *reimagine their role* in a remote learning world and *position themselves* to be there for students and families when schools reopen later.

view the Article Posted at Hatching Results Blog

Recession-Proof School Counseling: Strategies During Uncertain Times

By: Lisa De Gregorio

With the onset of COVID-19, the world has never experienced a school shutdown on such a scale. Most predictions indicate we're in it for the long haul – anywhere from the next 12-18 months – until greater testing and a vaccine are available. As a former school counselor who now provides professional learning and consultation services nationally, I understand the legitimacy and identity issues that school counselors may face, especially in the midst of this crisis where so much focus has been on the role of teachers in a new virtual learning world. By recession-proofing school counseling programs now, school counselors can secure their job relevance later.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), students are out of school nationwide in 177 countries, representing over 72% of the world's student population.¹ Edweek also reported that as of May 2, 2020, 45 states, four U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia, have ordered or recommended school building closures for the rest of the academic year. This impacts approximately 47.9 million public school students.²

The efforts of educators across the country to navigate and make rapid transformations in response to this global crisis have been nothing short of extraordinary. In addition to a total revamp of operations, schools have also been providing "grab and go" meals, electronic devices, and/or instructional packets to millions of students and families. With much persistence and grace – even as fellow staff, volunteers, and parents have contracted COVID-19 – educators have been shifting to online learning at most schools and working hard to adapt to this new normal.

For school counselors, this means delivering curriculum and other program activities in more creative ways. This is an **incredible opportunity for school counselors to not just adapt, but go even further by reimagining what their role is in a remote learning world and what it could become in the long term.**

The past few years have seen improved ratios and more earnest commitments from states and school districts to solidify the appropriate role of the school counselor. Yet with schools now bracing for a recession that will be exacerbated by a number of additional factors, school counselors could be facing uncertainty when painful decisions on budget and staffing need to be made.

John Fensterwald, editor at large of EdSource, where he recently published, "The coming storm: big budget cuts, rising costs for California schools," stated, "Unlike the Great Recession, the pandemic has imposed unprecedented expenses, from food to computer purchases. A return to school could compound staffing needs and add to expenses. Addressing learning deficits and issues of trauma will demand more counseling, after school programs or perhaps an extended year, adding cost pressures for districts looking to cut costs."³

In order for school counseling programs to continue to thrive during this crisis, school counselors have to predict, prepare, and innovate.

Our students deserve access to comprehensive school counseling programs that promote success and achievement for all through imperative social/emotional, academic development and post-secondary support. When implementing such programs, now is an especially important time to find opportunities for growth – both big and small – and make the most of them.

¹ <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

² <https://www.edweek.org/section/multimedia/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures.html>

³ <https://edsource.org/2020/the-coming-storm-big-budget-cut-rising-costs-for-california-schools/630938>

More than 177 countries have school
closed nationwide

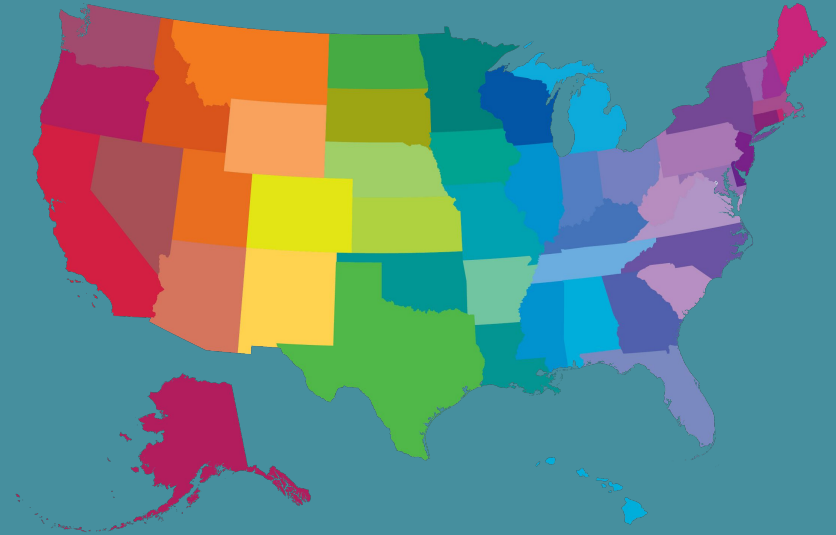
THAT'S MORE THAN
72% of THE
WORLD'S
STUDENT POPULATION

Source: UNESCO as of May 2, 2020



—
48 states, 4 US territories, and the District of Columbia have ordered or recommended school closures for remaining year.

50.8 MILLION PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES



Source: EdWeek as of May 15, 2020

How the Great Recession of 2008-2009 Changed America's Schools



A photograph of an empty classroom. The room features rows of light-colored wooden desks and chairs. Large windows on the left side offer a view of greenery outside. A chalkboard is visible at the front of the room. The text 'Planning Assumptions and Preparations for School Reopening' is overlaid in large yellow font.

Planning Assumptions and Preparations for School Reopening

Review the latest [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



The aftermath is too vast to comprehend at this moment yet the need to innovate and rise above *this global crisis* is undeniable.

The time to recession-proof school counseling is now.



Six Key Strategies

Opportunities for Growth **Right Now.**

1. Build Knowledge and Skills
2. Be Resourceful
3. Stand Out as a Leader
4. Be a Partner
5. Brand and Promote the Program
6. Be Indispensable

In order to thrive,
School Counselors
have to *predict,*
prepare, and *innovate.*

(These 6 Key Strategies Can Help!)



Build Your Knowledge Base and Skill Set.

Top Three Areas Now:

- Technical Skills
- Data Proficiency
- Mental Health and Social-Emotional Learning Development



Be Resourceful.

- Review ethical guidelines
- Collaborate with teachers
- Find inventive ways to offer school-wide events
- Participate in social media groups and blogs to exchange ideas
- Remember community partners
- Use technology tools to reach families



Stand Out as A Leader.

- Virtual Learning Plan
- Reentry plan for reopening
- Union contract addendums or MOU's
- State representatives and U.S. Dept. of Education

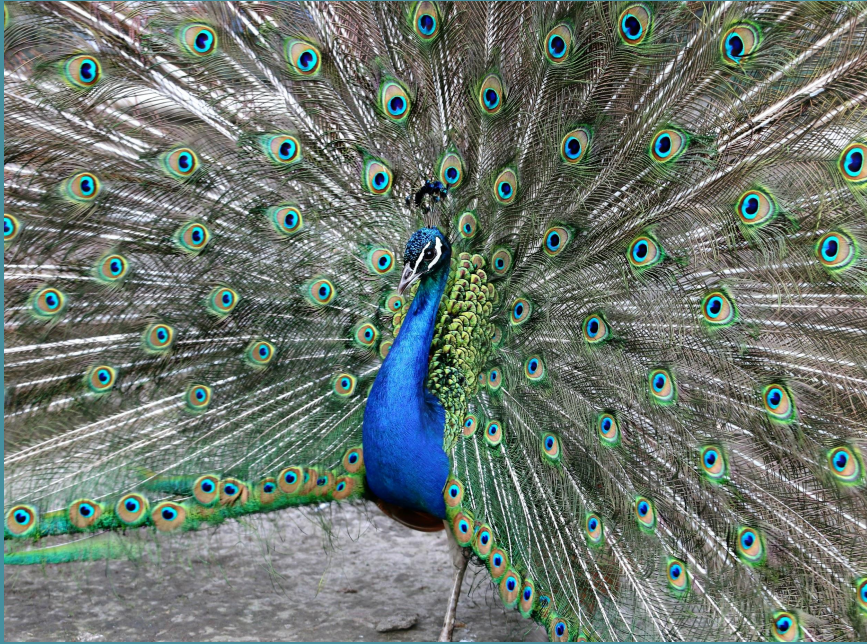
Sample Message to State and District Leaders from CASEL



Be A Partner.

- Accommodate *all* students during this global crisis
- Multilingual platforms and apps
- Support parents in their use of technology
- Be an ally to teachers and administrators
- Ask for help--how can others support you?

Sample Oregon Dept. Of Education Comprehensive School Counseling Continuum of Services during COVID-19 Plan



Brand and Promote the Program.

- Develop an “elevator speech”
- Share data and results
- Create a brief presentation or one-pager
- Utilize visual and communication tools



Be Indispensable.

- Develop a well-being check-in form or needs assessment
- Create ready-made downloadable resources
- Post resource pages
- Focus on social-emotional welfare of students
- Implement activities to increase connection to school and morale
- Plan to assist with the recovery

A Blueprint for Back to School

Six Areas of Work to Reopen Schools Safely:

1. School Operations
2. Whole Child Supports
3. School Personnel
4. Academics
5. Distance Learning
6. Other General Considerations

view the [American Enterprise Institute Report](#)



A Blueprint for Back to School

John P. Bailey and Frederick M. Hess

WITH CHRIS CERF, CARRIE CONAWAY, SHARIF EL-MEKKI,
DALE EROUJAGA, KAYA HENDERSON, DUNCAN KLUSMANN,
WAYNE LEWIS, PHYLLIS LOCKETT, CANDICE MCQUEEN,
KAREGA RAUSCH, NINA REES, GERARD ROBINSON, ANDREW
ROTHERHAM, IAN ROWE, IRVIN SCOTT, HANNA SKANDERA,
DAVID STEINER, JOANNE WEISS, AND JOHN WHITE

MAY 2020

A M E R I C A N E N T E R P R I S E I N S T I T U T E

Social and Emotional Learning

As we prepare to reopen our schools, we must also think of how to renew our schools.

CASEL: Leveraging SEL as You Plan to Reopen and Re-New

“

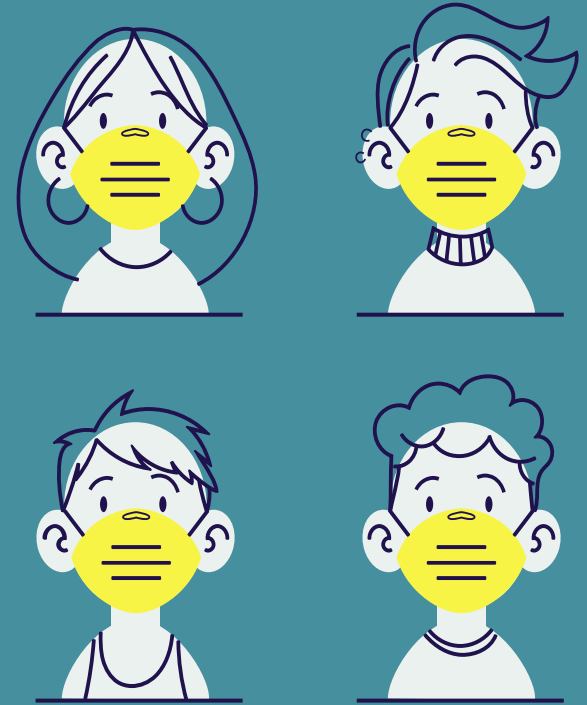
IT IS POSSIBLE TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT WILL BE. THE PRIMARY WAY TO PREPARE FOR THE UNKNOWN IS TO ATTEND TO THE QUALITY OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS, TO HOW WELL WE KNOW AND TRUST ONE ANOTHER.

”

Social and Emotional Impact of COVID-19

Mental Health research indicates that both adults and children demonstrate a wide-range of reactions following a catastrophic event. **The range of human responses can include physical, cognitive and emotional symptoms** including nausea, sleep disturbance, slowed thinking, bad memories, and regressed behavior, anxiety, guilt, depression, anger and a host of other responses.

We also need to consider students, family and staff members that have experienced grief, **loss**, domestic violence, abuse and much more.



Resource:

<https://www.washoeschools.net/cms/lib/NV01912265/Centricity/Domain/355/documents/Support%20OR-resources/A%20Resource%20for%20School%20Crisis%20Action%20and%20Recovery.pdf>

AN INITIAL GUIDE TO
LEVERAGING THE
POWER OF
SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL
LEARNING

→ AS YOU PREPARE TO
REOPEN AND RENEW
YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

4 Critical Actions:

- Take Time to Build Partnerships, Deepen Your Understanding and Plan for SEL
- Design Opportunities for Adults to Connect, Heal and Cultivate Their Own SEL Competencies and Capacities
- Create Emotionally and Physically Safe, Supportive and Engaging Learning Environments that Support All Students' SEL Development
- Use Data as an Opportunity to Deepen Relationships and Continuously Improve Support for Students, Families and Staff

CASEL: Leveraging SEL as You Plan to Reopen and Re-New



Creating a Supportive Environment

How School Counselors Can Support



Promote SEL Competencies: Provide Training to Staff on Ways to Integrate Social Emotional Learning into the Classroom



Intentionally Create Time in Your Schedules for Relationship and Community Building Activities as well as Explicitly Providing SEL Instruction



Talk to Students and Families About COVID-19 and provide resources to help build resilience and coping



Adult SEL

The stress and well-being of teachers, principals, and staff are not new concerns, but the disruptions caused by **COVID-19** have added to educators' **anxiety, worry, and stress**. In a survey by CASEL and the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence in late March, thousands of teachers described their most frequent emotions during COVID-19 as anxious, fearful, worried, overwhelmed, and sad.

"Teachers skilled at regulating their emotions report less burnout and more positive affect while teaching."

*Brackett, Mojsa, Palomera, Reyes, &
Salovey, 2008*

Self-Care

When supporting the social and emotional needs of students and families, especially those that have experienced trauma, staff members can experience **Secondary Traumatic Stress** and **Compassion Fatigue**.






Create a space for self-care

Create a daily commitment calendar for self-care

Identify community supports for staff/self

Create a space for connection & healing for staff/self!

Supporting Mental Health Needs

-  Train Staff to Identify the Signs of Trauma and Mental Health Concerns
 -  Create a Referral Process and Needs Assessment to Identify Students Needing Additional SEL Support
 -  Create Small Groups and/or Individual Check-Ins Based on Student SEL Needs
 -  Update a Referral List of Community Partners and Hotlines to Support Students and Families
-  Have a Seat at the Table for School-Based Data Teams (i.e. Behavioral Health Teams, MTSS Teams, Grade Level Teams)



Restorative Justice Practices



Advocate for Restorative vs. Punitive Disciplinary Practices that Could Potentially Re-Traumatize Students



Train Staff to Identify the Signs of Trauma and to Use Trauma Informed Practices (i.e. mindfulness techniques, classroom circles)



Assist Students/Staff with Resolving Conflict Through Peace Circles and Restorative Conversations



Serving as Student Advocates

The pandemic has **exposed and exacerbated existing inequities in education** and emphasized the need for learning environments that welcome and support all students, including those who were not equitably served before COVID-19.

- Many of our students may not have had the access or the support needed to be successful in virtual learning and as a result may be academically behind
- **Advocate** for additional supports for these students as they re-enter school such as tutoring, mentoring and outreach
- Ensure that information is provided to families in the language in which they speak

Transitioning and Closure

Offer students an opportunity to reconnect and create a sense of closure from the previous school year, such as by writing letters to their former classmates or teachers, or discussing with peers how the last few months will impact their perspectives as they enter a new grade or transition to post-secondary.



Preparing Your Program for Re-Entry

- **Revisit** Your Vision and Mission Statements
- Host an Advisory Council Meeting to **Get Feedback** from Staff, Parents, Students & Community Members
- Review Data to Determine Your Outcome Goals - **Look for Equity Gaps**, Conduct a Root Cause Analysis & a Needs Assessment
- **Work Collaboratively** with Staff to Identify the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors Students Need for Success
- **Be VISIBLE!** Share Your Classroom & Group Action Plan, Closing the Gap Plan and Annual Calendar with all stakeholders!





Thank You For Chatting With Us!

The time to start **RECESSION-PROOFING** school counseling is **now**.

We hope you'll use the strategies and resources within the article and those shared today to go out and deliver a school counseling program that is **INDISPENSABLE**.

For more information, we encourage you to review the sources linked within the article: www.hatchingresults.com/blog. Reach us at:

Lisa De Gregorio
lkdegregorio@gmail.com

Kirsten Perry
khperry@cps.edu

