

GMS Counseling Garden



September 2022
First Quarter Edition

Meet the School Counselors



How We Support Students . . .

- ◆ Social Emotional Learning
- ◆ Individual Counseling
- ◆ Group Counseling
- ◆ Classroom Lessons
- ◆ Course Planning
- ◆ Transition to Next Grade Level
- ◆ Student-centered parent conferences
- ◆ Collaboration with teachers, parents, and community resources

Introducing our new staff . . .

Dr. Bruce is our new Director of Counseling Services. He has worked as a school counselor, Director, and continues to work as a professor in school counseling programs in higher education. He is excited to bring the most current counseling initiatives to the counseling team.

Mr. Coles is our new 6th grade counselor. He actually joined Gunston in December 2021 as our 7th grade counselor. Mr. Coles is excited to welcome our new 6th graders and to support them during their time in middle school.

Mrs. Gibbs is our new 7th grade counselor. Ms. Gibbs is a recent graduate of Capella University and an alumna of Washington-Liberty High School. She is excited to begin her career as a middle school counselor.

Ms. Ford is our new Registrar. She is excited to join the Counseling team and support new families as they enter Gunston.

Returning Staff . . .

Ms. Carr is our 8th grade counselor and one of the Instructional Lead Coaches at Gunston. Ms. Carr is excited to connect counseling and teaching practices to our support with students.

Mrs. Cordero is our English Learners counselor for all grade levels. Ms. Cordero always enjoys welcoming our new EL families who come from all over the world.

Mrs. Kolody is our full-time Programs counselor and one of the Lead Educators at Gunston. She is excited to bring some new and exciting counseling activities for our Gunston students.

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What's Coming

September:

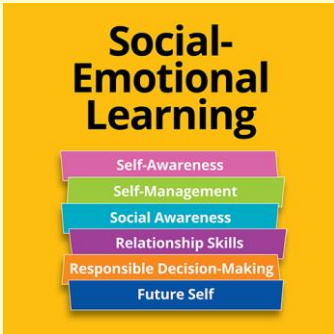
- ◆ Meet the School Counselors
- ◆ Planting Seeds of Resiliency Activity
- ◆ New Students to APS small groups

October:

- ◆ The Power of Words – Bullying Awareness
- ◆ Signs of Suicide Lesson - 8th Grade only

News & Tips for Parents

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) @ Home



Let's SELebrate and have a good year! The school counselors are looking forward to building meaningful partnerships with each of our families. One of our priorities is to connect social emotional learning (SEL) in school to home. Through SEL, middle school students can acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:

- Develop healthy identities
- Manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals
- Feel and show empathy for others
- Establish and maintain supportive relationships, and
- Make responsible and caring decisions

So what can you look forward to? Counselors will be sharing the SEL skills with families and providing tips and activities that can help to reinforce those skills at home.

Planting Seeds of Resiliency

September is *National Suicide Awareness* month. During this month, counselors will be focusing on the skills of resiliency. Resiliency is the ability to recover from disappointment, failure, fear, loss or other difficult situations that can sometimes lead to thoughts of self-harm. Here are some tips for parents to help with building resiliency:



- **Talk it out** – Children can learn resiliency skills by hearing from trusted adults about how they manage stressful situations
- **Move beyond the immediate** – Engage your child in conversations about future plans to redirect negative thinking away from the current issue
- **Focus on past successes** – Recall past successes and how your child was able to work through those challenges with success
- **Relax through mindfulness** – Guide your child through some deep breathing exercises, yoga, and other self-soothing techniques to relax the mind
- **Practice healthy habits** – Make sure that your child is getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods, and exercising to support with positive thinking
- **Be flexible in expectations** – Recognize that your child may be going through a tough time, so allow for flexibility in routines and school work to reduce feelings of too much pressure
- **Look for opportunities to grow** – Work with your child on growth mindset activities to develop strategies to effectively manage challenges and setbacks

The Power of Words

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou

October is *Bullying Awareness & Prevention* month. The counselors will be focusing on the words and language that are used to communicate with others. Words are very powerful and can have an impact on how someone feels and reacts. Words can hurt or heal!



As you talk to your child about bullying, please emphasize the importance of the words that they are using. This is especially important with online communication and social media. The meaning of words is not just what is said, but it is also how it is said. Things that are intended to be a joke are oftentimes not communicated clearly or taken in a way that can eventually lead to conflict. To reinforce this skill at home, be open and prepared to share your own experiences in how you use words in different situations and how others may feel or react.