

# **Hello Sessums Family**

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**Here are some helpful information and tips for eLearning. But first, a reminder of how we can help all students and families.**

Mrs. Indirah Persaud-Roll (Mrs. Roll)  
School Counselor

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# Erica Davidson (Mrs. Davidson) School Counselor

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# Amy Wagner (Ms. Wagner)

## School Psychologist:

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# **Teresa Schlesinger (Mrs. Schlesinger)**

School Social Worker:

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# We are your support staff!

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We are the support staff. We are here to support the students, our teachers and, you, our parents. This year has certainly been different with its challenges, but one thing remains the same... **YOU ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO US!!** With eLearning continuing for the remainder of the year, we wanted to remind you of how we are here to support you and your child, give some helpful tips for continued success in eLearning, and provide helpful contact numbers. Please feel free to contact any one of us if you need help or have concerns with anything. There are many facets to our job, so let us know how we can assist you.

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# Who Are School Psychologists?

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- School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. They collaborate with parents, educators, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students. School psychologists support strong connections between home and school.

# What Services Are Provided by School Psychologists?

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## **Working with Students, Their Families, and School Personnel to:**

- Support students' social, emotional, and behavioral health.
- Consult with school -based teams in defining academic and behavioral difficulties, developing interventions, and monitoring student 's response to interventions.
- Promote and participate in school -wide programs that help maintain a positive school climate conducive to learning.
- Conduct comprehensive psycho - educational evaluations.
- Provide individual and group counseling.
- Enhance understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- Respond to crises by providing leadership, direct support, and coordination with needed community services.

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Are Professionals trained to assist students with:

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- Study Skills
- Test Taking Skills
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Interpersonal and social skills
- Self-esteem
- Conflict resolution
- Decision-making skills
- Communication skills
- Personal responsibility
- Self-knowledge
- Resource utilization
- Education and career-planning skills

# School Counselors often provide...

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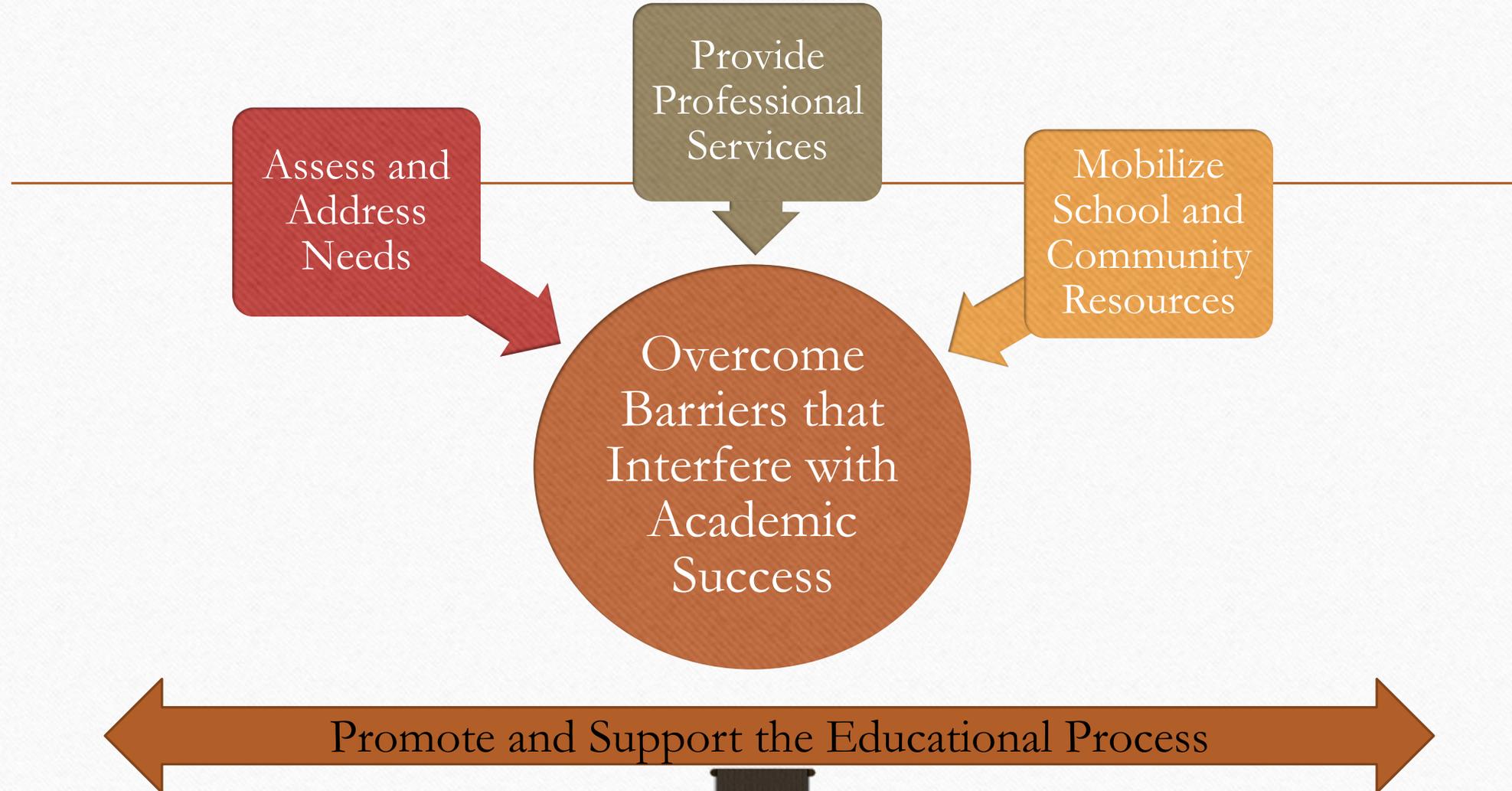
- Classroom Guidance
- Individual and Small Group Counseling
- Coordination of Child Study Team/504 Plans
- Character Education Program
- Bullying Prevention Skills
- School Wide Programs
- Orientation of New Students

# School Counselors Support By...

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- Listening to your feelings
- Talking with you if you are worried or having problems about school.
- Help you learn more about yourself or having a good relationship with others.
- Help you learn more about yourself or having a good relationship with others.
- Discuss special education needs
- Assist in crisis

# SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES



# SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

This is a *partial listing* of the areas in which School Social Workers provide service.  
Please see your school social worker for further information about the services provided at your site.



# UNIQUE AREA OF EXPERTISE

School Social Workers have Masters Degrees in Social Work and must be State Certified . They may also be licensed.

## Psychosocial Assessment (Holistic Approach)

Clinical Interviews  
(Students & Family)

Home Visits

Records Review  
(School, Medical, Agency)

Consultations  
(Agency, Teacher,  
Administrators)

## Parent Involvement and Family Advocacy

Educational Process,  
procedures and terminology

Serve as Student and Parent  
Advocate

Work with family to increase  
parent involvement

Relationship Building w/  
parents, teachers, school

Encourage and Promote Self  
Sufficiency

## School, Home and Community Liaison

Attendance Team and  
Truancy Intervention

Make the Connection

Problem Solving  
At All Levels

Collaboration and  
Coordination of Services

# Online learning tips to help parents continue with a successful virtual school year

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- **Reduce distractions**

- A [report in 2016](#) found that students spent about one-fifth of class time on laptops, smartphones and tablets, knowing that doing so could harm their grades. They check these devices for "non-class purposes" 11.43 times a day on average. The majority said they do so to stay connected and to fight boredom. In virtual learning, this behavior might be even more common. Social media and web surfing may hurt students' performance, as [multiple studies](#) show.
- It might be a good idea to limit the use of the devices until the schoolwork is done. Some students may need an adult to check on them.
- The surrounding environment can be a big distraction, too. Having favorite toys around can make it harder for the kid to focus. Consider setting up a quiet, clutter-free workspace that is comfortable for your child

# Brain breaks for online learning

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- Higher levels of screen time are associated with a variety of health harms, such as obesity and depression. Small amounts of daily screen use are not harmful and may have some benefits.
- It may be hard for some kids to sit through an entire class. Some children might need more frequent breaks than others. Include "brain breaks" in between learning. A young child may need a quick break after staying on a task for five to 25 minutes, said Linda Carling, an associate research scientist at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education Center for Technology in Education.
- Allowing time for exercise before your child is expected to focus on learning might be a good idea. Repeated physical activity during school can improve children's attention. Exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress and prevent anxiety. You may consider having the computer on a raised surface as some children better focus on tasks when standing.

# Time management tips

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- Having a consistent schedule for schoolwork will allow parents to plan the workday and let students more easily transition in and out of school time. Research shows that students who have higher GPAs are usually better at time management. Try to build as much structure and consistency as possible, setting times for meals, schoolwork and other activities.
- It is important to keep in mind that being on time for your Zoom is just as important as being on time to class. Instruction usually begins immediately and logging in late means valuable instruction time lost.

# Provide positive feedback

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- Many children miss receiving reinforcement and reassurance from teachers and counselors. Building a reward system can help maintain motivation. After kids complete a task or finish a class, consider praising them.
- Putting a check mark, star or sticker on a work assignment can go a long way to encourage a kid. Other options that may work well with younger kids are giving a sweet treat, allowing playtime with a favorite toy or an extra 15 minutes to play before bedtime. For high schoolers, watching a movie or getting extra tablet time might be a good reward.

# Be flexible

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- You may need to adjust your schedule as you go. If some class activities or subjects are more difficult, consider setting aside another time to work on that assignment. Try working with your children on more challenging tasks during the times of the day when they are most alert and engaged. Encourage your child to continue working on the things that come more easily when you are not readily available. It's helpful to share with the teacher what works best for you and your child.

# Help kids stay in touch with their friends

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- School is much more than a place to learn. It serves as a place for kids to socialize and hone their networking skills. Social ties that students have among each other have a positive effect on academic achievement.
- Many children will have new teachers and new friends. For some, it may be the first year of school. Allowing children to interact online with their friends might mitigate the effects of being socially distanced. Though a lot depends on teachers who will need to create opportunities to engage students with one another, there are ways parents can help.
- Implementing social interactions into the routine will help a kid stay connected. One example is organizing a daily video chat with a friend or a group of peers. School discussion boards, real-time classroom conversations and email communication are other ways your child can interact with peers. If a child is struggling with a task and you aren't there to help, encourage your child to try these methods to get support.

# Reach out to your child's teacher

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- Try to begin this academic year by opening a dialogue with your kids' teachers. Carling recommends setting up a day and time each week to connect. Difficulties with schoolwork and technology challenges are some of the reasons to contact the teacher.
- "Teachers can help with more than we really think. And they are usually willing to help. So, if any of the issues come up, if a child's not able to attend a class, if the child is unable to complete the work, if it's hard to get a routine set up, all those kinds of things are areas that a teacher can help with." Carling said.
- A lack of communication with the parent can be challenging for a teacher, particularly in the online learning environment. Being proactive is essential if your child is struggling in school. If a kid has difficulties with a task on deadline and you can work with the child only during the weekends, the first thing to do is get in touch with the teacher.

# Kids with special needs

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- The worst consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are experienced by the most vulnerable students, such as children who require an individualized education program (IEP), Carling points out. The first thing parents need to do is to meet with an IEP team and discuss what strategies and tools the school can put into place to support students in virtual learning. Work with your child's teachers to identify and remove any learning barriers.
- Many children may need more support with focus during classes. Carling recommends starting with smaller amounts of time for an activity. Reward the child for accomplishments, then gradually increase the duration of learning sessions.
- Keep in mind that most phones and laptops have built-in technology that can aid kids with special needs. For example, read aloud or text-to-speech can help struggling readers, and speech-to-text can help struggling writers.
- Every kid is unique and it's important to find out what works for best for your child. Set some time a few days into the semester to observe them and figure out the optimal length of learning sessions, the times that they are most engaged, and what helps them maintain focus.

# District Contact Numbers

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- Technology Support (813) 272-4785
- Hillsborough Virtual K-12 (813) 983-7278
- Mental Health Support (813) 272-4787
- General Questions (813) 272-4788
- School Choice Options and Magnet (813) 272-4692
- Spanish (813) 272-4789

# Having technology issues? Ask the social worker about the Tech Connect Program

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- **School Social Worker must make referrals to the Tech Connect program.**
- Our Tech Connect team will schedule a meeting to determine how we can best help you and your student(s) succeed in eLearning. Based on your family's needs, you may receive a computer, one year of internet access and/or guidance in using eLearning programs.
- Staff will check your equipment and talk with you and your child(ren) about your comfort level in using the technology, eLearning platforms and computer safety.
- A team member will provide instructions on the use of equipment, eLearning programs, computer operating systems and cyber safety.
- There will be ongoing learning opportunities through information, individual learning, and videos to help your family better understand and navigate eLearning.

# Further questions?

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If you would like to speak with us, or have further comments or concerns, please feel free to join us via Zoom for conference night from 4:00 – 7:00 at the link below. Remember, we are all in this together, so please utilize your resources.

<https://sdhc.zoom.us/j/86757235213?pwd=dTQ5RWNRQzE1bHIUNTBPcWFqcnVydz09>

- **Meeting ID: 867 5723 5213**
- **Passcode: Conf@2021**