



# COUNSELOR CORNER

*The official newsletter of Parras Counseling Team*

**(310) 798-8616 | [parrasmiddle.org/apps/pages/counseling](http://parrasmiddle.org/apps/pages/counseling)**



## A SUMMARY OF THIS ISSUE'S GREAT READS

### **Meet the Counselors!** *(page 2)*

We have some new counselors this year! Get to know your student's counselors by reading a quick biography on their professional background and hobbies.

### **How School Counselors Support Your Student** *(page 3)*

Read about how school counselors support your student within a comprehensive counseling program that includes social/emotional support, academic support, and college/career support.

### **What We've Been Up To** *(page 4)*

See a glimpse of what the counselors have been up to, like Hangout Spot and a 6th grade classroom guidance lesson on exploring career options. Pictures and graphs included!

### **Stress Management Strategies** *(page 5)*

Learn helpful strategies to help your student manage stress over the upcoming winter break.

*Welcome to a very special first issue of Counselor Corner for the 2021-2022 school year!*

Counselor Corner is a newsletter designed to update families on the counseling program at Parras Middle School. We would love to hear from YOU about topics you are interested in reading about in the next newsletters.

Please click on [this link](#) to share your input with us.  
Thank you!

# MEET THE COUNSELORS!

Parras Middle School is grateful to have two full-time counselors, one part-time counselor, and three counseling interns this year.



***Tiffany Straight, M.A., P.P.S***  
[\*tstraight@rbusd.org\*](mailto:tstraight@rbusd.org)

I am excited to join the Parras staff! I have been a school counselor since 1997 and was previously a counselor at Redondo Union High School. I work with students whose last name begins with the letters A-K. I earned my Bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science and Master's in Educational Counseling at CSU Dominguez Hills. I enjoy camping, hiking with my dogs, mountain bike & dirt bike riding, reading and spending time with family and friends.



***Lisa MacMillan, M.S., P.P.S***  
[\*lmacmillan@rbusd.org\*](mailto:lmacmillan@rbusd.org)

I have had the pleasure of working at Parras Middle School for the past 11 years. I work with students whose last name begins with the letters L-Z. I earned both my Masters of Science and Bachelors of Science degrees in Clinical Psychology from CSU Long Beach and my Pupil Personnel Services Credential from CSU Sacramento. I am AVID certified and a native Spanish speaker. I love spending time with family, friends, traveling, cooking and crafting.



***Nina Hamouni, M.A., P.P.S***  
[\*nhamouni@rbusd.org\*](mailto:nhamouni@rbusd.org)

This is my very first year at Parras! Prior to my role as an intervention counselor, I worked in treatment with adolescents and families for many years. At Parras, I work with students by providing individual and group counseling services for specific areas of need. In the spring I teach classes about nicotine and tobacco prevention. In my free time I love to be outdoors. I enjoy hiking, climbing and camping with friends and family.



***Melissa Hogan***

Melissa Hogan is a counseling intern at Parras. She is earning her master's degree in counseling from LMU. She meets with students on Wednesdays and Thursdays.



***Cecilia Pho***

Cecilia Pho is a counseling intern at Parras. She is earning her master's degree in school counseling from CSU Long Beach. Cecilia is at Parras on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



***Kate Hastings***

Kate Hastings is a counseling intern and teacher at Parras. She has been teaching Science at Parras for 15 years. She is earning her master's degree in counseling from USC.

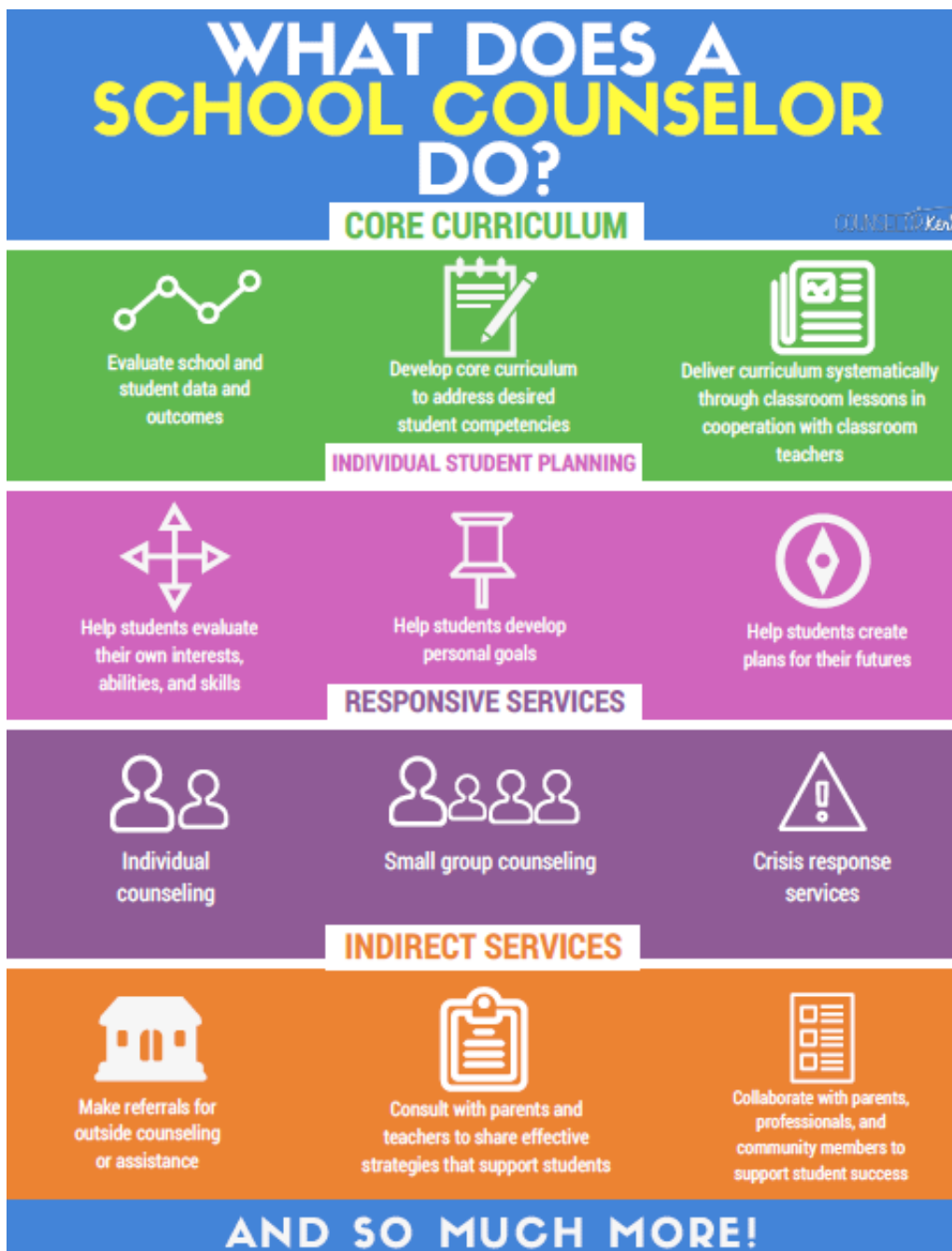


# HOW SCHOOL COUNSELORS SUPPORT YOUR STUDENT

By Melissa Hogan

Here at Parras Middle School, we know how important it is for us to serve the whole child.

This includes services in academic, social, emotional, and career development. The counselors work with students individually and in groups, depending on what their needs are. We make sure the students are aware of the events and clubs happening on campus so they can join their peers. We empower students to share how they would like us to support them. We guide students with setting and reaching short term goals. There is an emphasis to visit a counselor if students need any kind of support during the school day. Although not miracle workers, we strive to implement positive interventions for students. Together we work as a team with guardians and administration to ensure positive outcomes during the school year. We value collaborating with the family to make sure the student is fully supported. We want to make sure all students feel their voices are being heard and are given a chance to express their feelings. There is pressure to perform perfectly and we are here to make sure the student is not missing out on just being a kid!



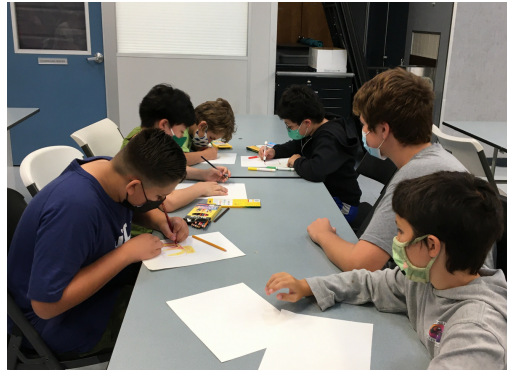
*School counselors focus their services on three domains:*

**Academic Development**

**Social/Emotional Development**

**College/Career Development**

# WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO...



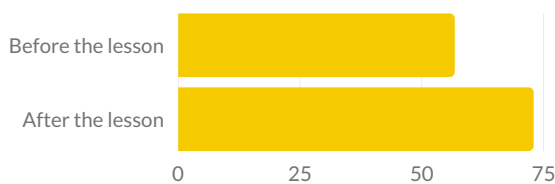
## Hangout Spot!

The Parras Counselors host Hangout Spot every Thursday in the cafeteria during lunch. Hangout Spot is an awesome way for students to make new friends, play board games, create art, and more! We were thrilled to have Meredith, the Therapy Dog, join us for our first Hangout Spot of the year back in September!

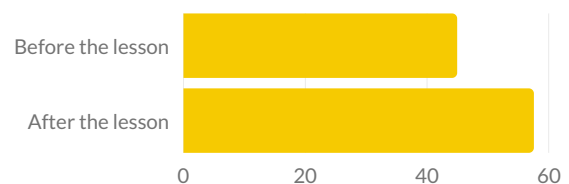
## "Exploring Your Career Options" Classroom Lesson

During the first week of November, the Parras Counseling Team presented a classroom guidance lesson on career exploration called "Exploring Your Career Options" for all 6th grade students created by Cecilia Pho, our counseling intern. The topic of exploring careers and understanding options after high school was chosen based on a survey given to all 6th grade students asking what topics (i.e. academic, social/emotional, college/career) they were interested in learning about in a classroom counseling lesson. Before the lesson, students completed a pre-test to measure what they already knew about career exploration. After the lesson, students completed a post-test to measure the lesson's impact. We are excited to share some highlights from the results:

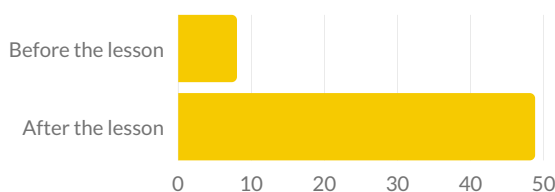
**28.5% increase in students who strongly agree it is helpful to consider skills and interests when exploring careers.**



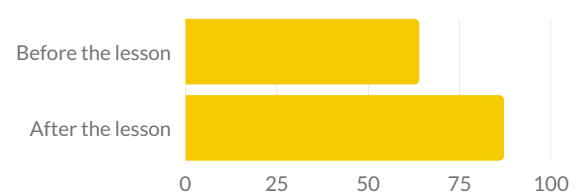
**28% increase in students who strongly agree continuing to learn new skills after high school is related to long-term success**



**510% increase in students who are able to list three distinct options after high school.**



**36% increase in students who know what a career assessment is.**



Students will continue to receive information on college/career during their time at Parras to help prepare them for high school and beyond. Special thank you to our 6th grade Science teachers for helping to make this lesson possible!



# STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

By Lisa MacMillan

For many, the holidays mean time off. For adults, that may mean a day or two off. For children, however, it almost always means multiple days off of school. This break, while necessary for children, can be stressful for families as they try to maintain their routine, balance their time, and coordinate schedules. There are also social issues that arise for children and adolescents on their extended school breaks. Dr. Hollie Sobel, PhD, a licensed clinical psychologist at the Family Institute states, “During breaks, children lose access to the social contact that is inherent in the school setting. Without this, children with poorly developed social skills or social anxiety can experience feelings of isolation during vacation. For the socially active child, time off of school can lead to stress if he or she does not attend every possible social activity. This child may fear that they will lose their social status if they are not present at an event.” In both of these cases, Sobel says balance is the key, and that parents have the opportunity to instill time management lessons.

*Here are some ideas for managing the scheduling, the stress, and creating balance while the kids are home from school over winter break:*

## **Balance structure and freedom.**

Maintain a structure that includes a bedtime/curfew and a wake-time, but do not be too rigid. Studies show that keeping your bed and waking times within one or two hours of your daily routine during breaks should not interfere with your regular schedule.

## **Plan ahead.**

Parents’ schedules are important, and often not as flexible. Remember to work with other parents and/or family members to plan outings, and coordinate vacation time with spouses or other caretakers. Planning ahead can make the holiday break run more smoothly and reduce stress.

## **Recognize teachable moments.**

Take the time off as an opportunity to teach your kids time management, organizational, and independence skills.

## **Balance family and friends.**

Encourage less social children to reach out to peers and get out of the house. Look for activities that might suit them, or help them send texts or call friends to initiate plans. For overly social children, help them to manage the anxiety that can come with trying to fill every moment with a social activity by encouraging moderation and balance.

## **Develop traditions and rituals.**

Having traditions and rituals help build family cohesion. Research shows that high levels of family cohesion and support are related to good coping skills. Use the winter break to build meaningful, memorable moments with your kids.

**Check out these great stress-relieving apps!**

Headspace



Stop, Breathe & Think



Calm



Mindshift

