

The Summer Leadership Academy for Connecticut School Counselors

In order to supplement the current professional development programs offered to school counselors by the professional associations, and staff development offered at the district level, the Connecticut School Counselor Association (CSCA) and the Connecticut Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors (CACES) are collaborating in the development and implementation of an annual Leadership Academy for school counselors. During the course of any given school year, the annual conferences sponsored by the CT professional counseling associations are the primary source for school counselors to update their skills, to find out about new programs, to network, and to receive current information on issues that have an impact on their role. It is often stated by school counselors that staff development programs in their districts do not address specific school counseling issues.

The idea of a leadership academy for school counselors is not new. A number of state school counselor associations from all over the country are offering professional development through an academy that addresses the critical issues of the 21st century, which school counselors, at all levels, are facing in their schools and communities.

The Mission of the Academy is to provide professional development opportunities that promote the professional and personal growth of school counselors. The following goals have been established for the Academy:

1. Plan programs that address the assessed needs and current issues affecting school counseling.
2. Promote school counselor collaboration and partnerships with all stakeholders of the school counseling program.
3. Advocate for the role of the school counselor.
4. Promote the role of the school counselor in student academic, career and personal/social development, and in improved academic performance.

Since the approval of the establishment of the Academy by the CSCA Board in 2005, and with the support of CACES, the following Summer Leadership Academies have been held:

- The first Summer Leadership Academy for school counselors was held during the summer of 2006. The topic was Advocacy and Leadership Skills for School Counselors. Carol Dahir, Ed.D, New York Institute of Technology and Carolyn Stone, Ed.D, the University of South Florida conducted the workshop.
- The second Summer Leadership Academy for school counselors was held during the summer of 2007 at Saint Joseph College, West Hartford. The topic was, Public Relations Skills for School Counselors: Effective Strategies for Change, Susan Weinberger, Ed.D, conducted the workshop.
- The third Summer Leadership Academy for school counselors was conducted at Saint Joseph College over a two day period, Wednesday, July 9 and Thursday, July 10, 2008. The theme was, "School Counselors Influencing Change". The focus was on preparing school counselors as trainers for presenting the revised edition of the comprehensive school counseling program guide 2008. Each counselor learned about the new guide, and acquired presentation strategies. Each participant was provided with a jump drive with a fully developed program presentation and the comprehensive school counseling program guide 2008.

- The Summer Leadership Academy held in June, 2009, addressed the needs of graduate students in school counseling who would be interns and practicum students in school districts around the state during the 2009-2010 school year. The Academy focused on strategies, interventions and information to help graduate students navigate the college and post-secondary planning process at their respective site placements.

Committee for the Summer Leadership Academy:

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