



CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS OF NEW YORK

FALL 2021

President's Message

WELCOME BACK CSSC/NYC

My name is Sarah Stiglianese. I am honored and humbled to serve as your President for this upcoming school year. I want to thank Christine Curcio for her continued effort and dedication to this organization over the past 11 years as Vice President and President. These are big shoes to fill and I am grateful in the part she has played in my own professional development and involvement!

To introduce myself, I am a school counselor at Fontbonne Hall in Brooklyn. I graduated with my Master's from St. John's in 2020, having interned at Molloy and TMLA. As the product of Catholic school education, I am lucky to be among such incredible educators in this profession.

Over the past few weeks, we've opened our doors, and for some of us Zooms/Google Meets, to welcome back students for a new school year. The impact of the ongoing pandemic still lingers on the academic, mental, and social well-being of our students and staff. I am interested in hearing more about what formats your schools have opted for this year at our first meeting - Wednesday, November 17th at 4:30PM.

There's one word I hope we can focus on this year: **GRACE**. This past year and a half we were stretched in unimaginable ways that we have never had to deal with before. Grace can be offered to anyone, at any time, for any reason. During this next year, we must continue to treat each other with compassion and kindness in light of the collective and personal stress we've experienced. I challenge you to show grace to yourselves, your students, their families, your faculty and administration. Who wouldn't benefit from more understanding, concern, and empathy in their life?

With that, I pray that your year has gotten off to a good start. I look forward to connecting soon!

All the best,
Sarah Stiglianese

President
CSSC/NYC 2021-22
Sarah Stiglianese
Fontbonne Hall
csscnyc1@gmail.com



Going Back to "Normal?"

At the start of the school year, my principal offered insight from a new book: *Nine BIG Questions Schools Must Answer to Avoid Going 'Back to Normal'* by Will Richardson and Homa Tavangar. **You can download a free copy here:**

<https://bigquestions.institute/9-questions/>. The following piece offers some insight from the book and what we can do to continue improving our school's culture, climate, and community.

There's no denying it, these past 2 years have changed the landscape of education and the role of the school counselor. We have had to quickly adapt to new online tools, find unique ways to build relationships through screens, and respond to arising concerns in our society and media that impact our students and staff. Although the majority of students are returning to their usual, in-person learning, we must continue being flexible, innovative, and attuned to their evolving needs.

"I can't wait for everything to go back to *normal*." One of the most common phrases heard during the pandemic. While some normalcy this school year has been appreciated, that should not be our only goal. This school year offers a perfect opportunity to redefine and envision a "different" kind of *normal*.

The pandemic revealed some deep-rooted inequities, gaps, and exclusions within education. Traditional systems and practices of education do not always meet the unique needs, strengths, and qualities of all students -- standardized evaluations, methods of discipline, access to supports, etc.

As school counselors, our role is to make school a welcoming, accepting, and safe place for all learners. I challenge you to consider this question: Are there policies and practices in place at our schools that no longer best serve the needs of our students? We are uniquely positioned to start answering this question, continuing to advocate for change, and strive for equity.

**NEXT
MEETING
DATE**

**WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 17
4:30PM**

ZOOM LINK TO COME



In crisis?

**Text HELLO
to 741741.**

**Free, 24/7, confidential
crisis support by text.**