



# BUILDING A DREAM TEAM: A COLLABORATIVE COUNSELOR NETWORK

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# MEET THE STARTING LINEUP

Your Collaborative Counselor Dream Team



**Power Forward**

# LASHANA RICHARDS

School Counselor  
The A&T Four Middle College

"The Litigator"

The A&T Four Middle College opened in 2003 on the campus of North Carolina Agriculture & Technical State University. The Middle College is proudly named after four North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University students who initiated a peaceful, civil rights sit-in protest at the F.W. Woolworth Department Store lunch counter in Greensboro, igniting a national movement. We are a single gender, all male, school with a history of academic and college going success.



**POINT GUARD**

## **STEPHANIE PRESTON**

School Counselor at  
The Middle College at GTCC High Point

"The task manager, detail person, designer and editor"

The Middle College at GTCC - High Point was established in 2005 as a joint venture between Guilford County Schools and Guilford Technical Community College. Students have the opportunity to earn their high school diploma and an associates degree.



## Hall of Fame COACH

# NICOLE WEBSTER

School Counselor

The Early College at Guilford

“The Mentor”

North Carolina’s first early college high school, The Early College at Guilford is a public “early entrance” high school for highly academically gifted students in grades 9-12 located on the campus of Guilford College, a selective liberal arts four-year institution.



Small “The ROOKIE” Forward

## KENDRA GRAHAM

School Counselor  
The Kearns Academy  
“The Tech Guru”

The Kearns Academy specializes in Computer Science or Information Technology (IT). They have pathways in Artificial Intelligence, Computer Science and Cybersecurity.



Center

## CRYSTAL HORTON

School Counselor

The STEM Early College at NCAT

"The motivator and culinary critic"

Rich in diverse cultures, perspectives, and ideas, STEM Early College employs a real world and problem based method to help students develop initial and unique thinking skills. Our school specializes in science, technology, engineering and math.

# GAME DAY PLAYBOOK

01

The Game Plan: Welcome & Introductions

02

Tough Defense & Our Playbook

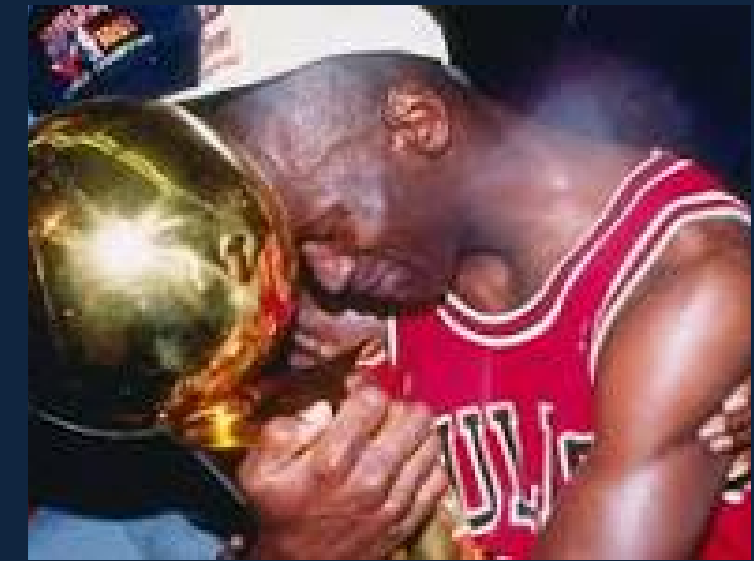
03

Huddle Time, Scrimmage & Plays 1-3

04

The Bench, Halftime Show & Buzzer Beater

# THE GAME PLAN



"Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships."

~Michael Jordan

**01** Our network spans diverse schools with varied communities, yet we share common ground. Recognizing both our differences and our shared challenges is the foundation of meaningful collaboration and growth.



**02** Together, we are stronger. By connecting across schools, we reduce isolation, share solutions, and ensure every student – regardless of which campus they attend – benefits from our collective wisdom and coordinated support.



**03** We like to have fun while doing this work together.





01

Limited professional development tailored specifically to early college counselors and their unique context.

02

Unique responsibilities not always reflected in traditional counseling models or standard training programs.

03

Need for collaboration across schools with similar structures, challenges, and student populations to build shared solutions.

# TOUGH DEFENSE

"Once we all came together and understood that we could bounce off each other and play off of each other, and then no one could stop us..."

~Cynthia Cooper



# OUR PLAYBOOK

01

Created a collaborative counselor network across schools to share expertise and build collective capacity.

02

Shared resources, tools, calendars, and procedures to streamline workflows and reduce duplication of effort.

03

Developed common approaches to graduation tracking, student support, and postsecondary planning.

04


Improved efficiency while maintaining individualized student support and consistent counseling practices.

# IN THE HUDDLE

"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." – Phil Jackson

**01** Look at your ticket and find your animal mascot. 

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**02** Make the sound of that animal in order to find the other people in the room with the same mascot. 

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**03** Goal: Break the ice, build connections, and identify shared challenges across early college counseling programs. 

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# SCHOOL IS NEVER OUT FOR THE PRO

*Nido R. Qubein* | HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT



## THE SCRIMMAGE



**01** Analyze real-world counseling challenges faced by early college counselors and develop practical, collaborative solutions as a team.



**02** Work in small groups with focused discussion questions to explore each scenario deeply and share insights across schools.



**03** Each group will debrief key takeaways and identify shared tools or strategies that can be implemented in your own counseling program.



# PLAY 1:

## GRADUATION AUDITS REMOVED

01

Your Challenge

Develop a system that ensures every student remains on track for graduation while managing your other counseling responsibilities.

02

Discuss and answer the questions on your card.

03

Be prepared to share out using your Share Out Focus as a guide.

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### Situation

For years, your district's Student Information Department conducted annual graduation audits.

This year, district leadership announces that schools will be responsible for conducting their own graduation audits.



# PLAY 2:

## INFINITE CAMPUS GOES LIVE

01

Your Challenge

Develop a collaborative support system that helps counselors learn the platform while continuing to serve students effectively.

02

Discuss and answer the questions on your scenario sheet

03

Be prepared to share out using your Share Out Focus as a guide.

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### SITUATION

YOUR DISTRICT LAUNCHES INFINITE CAMPUS.

TRAINING SESSIONS HAVE FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON ATTENDANCE, GRADEBOOK FUNCTIONS, AND BASIC NAVIGATION. AS THE ONLY COUNSELOR IN YOUR BUILDING, STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATORS EXPECT YOU TO BECOME THE EXPERT IMMEDIATELY.



## PLAY 3:

# "ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL"

01

Your Challenge

Develop recommendations for how districts can create more inclusive professional development and communication systems that recognize the unique needs of Early/Middle College counselors while maintaining district-wide consistency.

02

Discuss and answer the questions on your card

03

Be prepared to share out using your Share Out Focus as a guide.

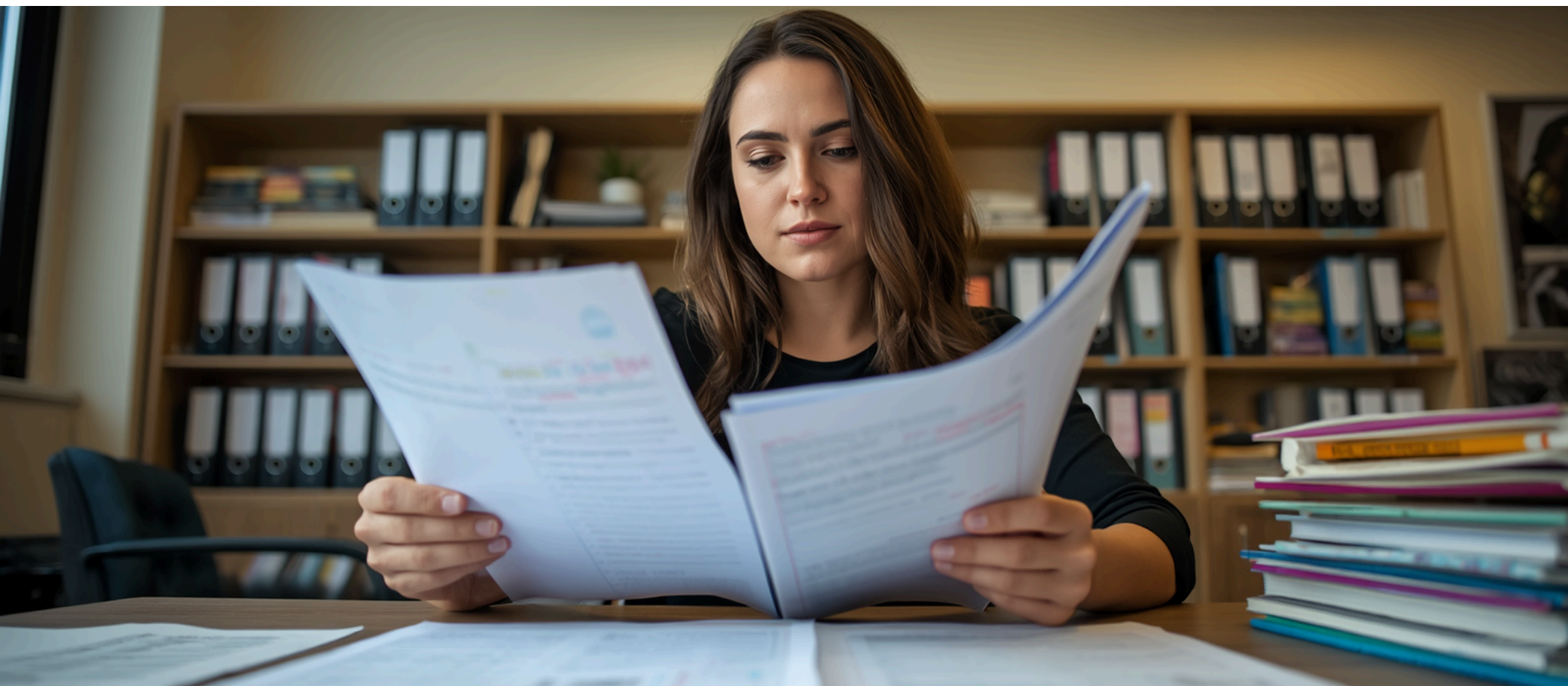
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## Situation

Your district's School Counseling Department hosts monthly professional development meetings for all counselors. The meetings provide valuable information, but much of the content is designed around the realities of traditional high schools.



# EQUIPMENT CHECK: HANDOUTS



**01**

Graduation Audit Template,  
Shared School Counselor  
Calendar, and Postsecondary  
Planning Timeline

**02**

Annual Counseling Goals  
Planning Worksheet and  
Scenario Discussion Guide for  
group work sessions

**03**

Resource-Sharing Template for  
Cross-School Collaboration –  
connecting counselors beyond  
today's session

# THE BENCH: SHARED TOOLS

01

Graduation Audit Template & Shared School Counselor Calendar – track student progress and coordinate key dates across schools with consistency.



02

Postsecondary Planning Timeline & FAFSA Tracking Systems – ensure every student stays on track for college applications, deadlines, and financial aid.



03

Communication Templates & Student Progress Monitoring Tools – streamline outreach and maintain consistent, data-informed student support.



# HALFTIME SHOW



01

One Process I will improve...  
Think about a current workflow  
or system in your counseling  
program that could be  
streamlined or strengthened.

02

One Tool I will implement...  
Identify a shared resource or  
template from today's session  
you can bring back to your  
school immediately.

03

One Connection I will maintain...  
"When counselors collaborate,  
students benefit. Shared  
systems create consistency,  
increase efficiency, and allow us  
to focus on what matters most."

# BUZZERBEATER: THANK YOU !

01

Thank you for your participation and engagement today. Your commitment to collaboration makes a real difference for students everywhere.

02

Keep the momentum going! Stay connected, share resources, and continue building your counselor network beyond today's session.

03

Reach out to connect, collaborate, and grow our dream team network.

04

When counselors collaborate, students benefit. Shared systems create consistency, efficiency, and stronger student support.



# OVERTIME: Q&A

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Any questions or reflections? We'd love to hear from you!



# JOIN OUR ROSTER



**Stephanie Preston**



**Shana Richards**



**Nicole Webster**

