

Fall 2025 Edition

WSCA Newsletter



Dr. Daphne Ali,
Newsletter Editor



Hello WSCA Members!

*We hope your school year is off to a fantastic start—filled with energy, fresh goals, and meaningful connections with your students! Whether you're already in full swing or just getting settled, know that **you're never alone on this journey**. WSCA is always here to support, inform, and uplift you.*

*As counselors, social workers, and psychologists, we juggle so much—academic planning, emotional support, crisis intervention, and more. That's why **staying informed and feeling connected with each other is more important than ever**.*

From career fairs and college planning to mental health support and community partnerships, there's so much to look forward to this year—and we'll be with you every step of the way.

*So grab your favorite fall drink ☕, take a quick break, and enjoy this edition of the WSCA Newsletter. **You're doing amazing work**—and we're proud to be in your corner. ❤️ Here's to a strong, informed, and supported school year ahead!*

www.westernsuffolkcounselors.org

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A Special Message From Your 2025-2027 WSCA President

My name is **Peter Franzese**. I'm so excited to be serving as the **Western Suffolk Counselors' Association (WSCA) President** for the next two years. My career in Higher Education started at Dowling College as an Admissions Counselor, and then in Student Services. I have also worked at LIU Post in Transfer Admissions and in Financial Aid at Stony Brook University. I am currently a **Lead Undergraduate College Advisor at Stony Brook University**, academically advising first and second-year students. It's an honor and a blessing to take on this leadership role and to have the opportunity to give back to an association that has meant so much to me over the years.

I hope you had a wonderful summer filled with rest and rejuvenation, and that you're feeling refreshed for the upcoming school year. I'm excited for the year ahead and the opportunities we have to make a **positive impact on our students**. Let's approach this new year with **enthusiasm**, a focus on **collaboration**, and a **shared commitment** to our students' success. An association is only as strong as its members. **Mark your calendars** now and make a plan to attend as many WSCA events this year as possible.

Please consider **joining a committee** or **presenting at an upcoming conference**. There are so many ways to **get involved and make a difference**. Our shared passion and commitment in working with students and in helping them reach their full potential is what drives us in our profession.

I'm excited to discuss how we can work together to honor and extend the **tradition of WSCA** forward for years to come, and to hear your thoughts and ideas for potential workshop topics/speakers that you believe are meaningful to the **counseling community**. Your feedback is always welcomed and appreciated!! I'd love to hear from you. My email address is [**peter.franzese@stonybrook.edu**](mailto:peter.franzese@stonybrook.edu).

I hope you have a great start to the 2025-2026 school year and I look forward to seeing you at WSCA events throughout the year!!!

Warm Regards,
Peter Franzese
2025-2027 WSCA President



✨ WSCA is Back & Better Than Ever!

The WSCA Executive Council has been hard at work all summer preparing for an exciting new school year. We're thrilled to share a full lineup of events for the remainder of 2025 that you won't want to miss:

📢 **Kickoff Event: Fall Membership Meeting**

📅 Monday, September 29th | ⌚ 4:00–7:00 PM

📍 The Essex, Brentwood

🎓 Hosted by Dickinson College, Rutgers University, and the University of Rochester

👉 See the attached flyer for details and registration!

🎓 **Connecting Students to Their Futures: Annual Fall College & Career Fair**

📅 Thursday, October 16th | ⌚ 6:30–8:30 PM

📍 Hauppauge High School

💡 A fantastic opportunity for students to meet college reps and explore post-secondary pathways!

👉 **Save the Date: 49th LICAC Conference**

📅 Friday, November 7th

📍 SUNY Old Westbury

🔗 In collaboration with NCA & EECA

🎤 Keynote Speaker: Joshua Varon, Founder & CEO, Varon Consulting

✨ Topic: Unlocking Potential: Empowering School Counselors with ChatGPT and AI

🎄 **Celebrate With Us: Annual Holiday Happening**

📅 Monday, December 8th | ⌚ 4:00–8:00 PM

📍 Captain Bill's

🥂 Wrap up the year with colleagues for an evening of celebration, networking, and holiday cheer!





WESTERN SUFFOLK COUNSELORS'
ASSOCIATION'S

FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
GIVEN AND SPONSORED BY:

Dickinson



UNIVERSITY of
ROCHESTER

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH
4-7 PM
THE ESSEX CLUB
BRENTWOOD, NY

[REGISTER HERE](#)



KICK OFF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES.
DINNER WILL BE SERVED IN ADDITION TO A CASH BAR.

THE SUFFOLK COUNTY DA'S OFFICE WILL BE ON SITE
TO DISCUSS THE FREE WORKSHOPS THEY CAN PRESENT
IN YOUR SCHOOLS

\$20 - REGULAR MEMBERS

\$45 - NON-MEMBER (INCLUDES MEMBERSHIP FEE)

\$15 - GRAD STUDENT/RETIREE MEMBER

\$35 GRAD STUDENT/RETIREE (INCLUDES MEMBERSHIP FEE)



PARTNERING WITH CPS: WHAT EVERY SCHOOL COUNSELOR SHOULD KNOW

A WSCA Interview with
Sharon Stenger,
Assistant Division Administrator –
Suffolk County DSS



How can school counselors and CPS work together more effectively? What really happens after a CPS report is filed? And are there services available before a family is in crisis?

Recently, WSCA sat down with **Sharon Stenger**, Assistant Division Administrator for Suffolk County DSS's Family and Children Services Division. With **over 30 years of experience**, Mrs. Stenger offered candid insights into the role of CPS, how schools can strengthen their collaboration with DSS, and the range of preventive supports available to families.

When and How Should Schools Contact CPS?

School staff are mandated reporters, but the process can feel confusing. Mrs. Stenger clarified two pathways:

- If **CPS is already involved**, and you have additional information or concerns to share about a family: Contact the caseworker or supervisor directly using the general line.
- If this is a **new concern**: Call the **State Central Registry** at **1-800-635-1522** to file a report.

 *Pro tip: Always note the caseworker's name and follow up if needed.*

What Happens After a Report?

After a report is made, the assigned CPS worker will contact the reporter to **verify information** and ask any follow-up questions. Due to confidentiality laws, detailed updates can't be shared. Investigations last up to 60 days and we meet with all children and family members during that time, make home visits, as well as gather collateral information.

However, at the end of an investigation, a letter will indicate if the case was:

- **Indicated**: A fair preponderance of evidence supports the allegation.
- **Unfounded**: There wasn't sufficient evidence to support the claim.

? Common CPS Misconceptions

One major myth? That CPS's goal is always removal. In truth:

"Our mission is to **keep families together** whenever possible," Mrs. Stenger emphasized.

Even when a child enters foster care, the **primary goal is reunification**. Foster care is used when safety cannot be ensured at home, and relatives are always considered first as placement options.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION WITH CPS....

🚩 Red Flags to Watch For

Be alert for:

- 🤔 Unexplained injuries
- 🚿 Poor hygiene or neglect
- 📖 Academic or attendance issues
- 🚫👶 Age-inappropriate sexual behavior
- 🍴 Extreme hunger or untreated medical needs
- ✂️ Self-injurious behavior or suicide attempts
- 👊 Aggressive, disruptive, or antisocial behavior
- 👓 Chronic unattended medical needs (e.g., eyeglasses, dental problems, etc.)
- 🏠 Absence of supervision at home
- 🏃 Chronic running away
- 🍷 Substance or alcohol abuse

PROTECT
OUR
CHILDREN

💛 Want to Strengthen Collaboration?

🔊 Invite CPS to your school! They're happy to send a **supervisor or director** to explain the process and meet your team. ☎️ Call **631-854-9029** to schedule.

🛡️ Preventive Services: Help Without a Hotline Call

Families don't need to be reported to get help. DSS can assign a **preventive caseworker** for support with parenting, medical needs, or housing (if eligibility requirements are met). These cases are **voluntary**. ☎️ Call **631-854-9359** to refer a family.

🔍 Hidden Resources You Might Not Know About

DSS also offers:

- 🛒 SNAP (food assistance)
- 👶 Childcare subsidies
- 🔥 HEAP (heating help)
- 👤 Burial assistance
- 💰 Child support enforcement
- 🏠 Medicaid & transportation
- 👶 Safe Haven infant drop-off
- 🏠 Foster home recruitment – Always needed!



Full resource list: <https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Social-Services>

Final Thoughts

Mrs. Stenger's message was clear: **CPS is not an adversary** to schools—it is a partner. And early collaboration between school staff and DSS can make a world of difference for vulnerable children and families. Let's continue to lean into these partnerships, ask questions, and tap into the powerful network of services already available in Suffolk County. For questions or speaking engagement requests, contact DSS at **631-854-9029**.



presents its

COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIR

**OCTOBER 16, 2025
6:30PM TO 8:30PM**

at

**HAUPPAUGE HIGH
SCHOOL**

This event is free and open to ALL students and families. Over 100 representatives will be on hand to answer questions and offer information. Students are encouraged to register ahead of time to make their fair visit more efficient.

**A SCHOLARSHIP WILL BE AWARDED
TO ONE LUCKY ATTENDEE!!**

**REGISTER
NOW**



Don't miss our "Ask The Experts" panel starting at 5:30. Admissions reps will be speaking about how to maximize your chances of getting acceptances. Submit your questions here.



www.westernsuffolkcounselors.org



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TOP 15

PUBLIC SCHOOL
IN THE NATION*



TOP 45

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IN THE NATION*

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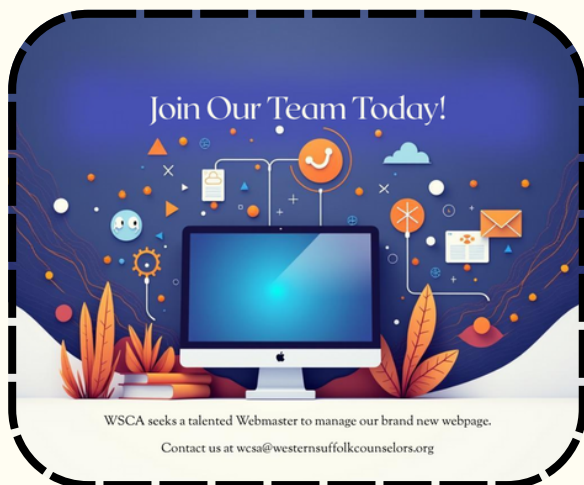
Grow, thrive, become ever better.



**BEGIN YOUR
JOURNEY TODAY**



UNIVERSITY of
ROCHESTER



☀️ Join Our Leadership Team

📢 **WSCA Needs YOU!**

WSCA is excited to announce that we have **3 open council positions** and we're looking for passionate, dedicated professionals to step into these important roles:

***Vice President of Operations
Director of Guidance Representative
Webmaster***

This is a wonderful opportunity to make your voice heard, collaborate with colleagues, and help shape the future of our association. Whether you're interested in **leadership, technology, or representing school counselors**, there's a place for you on our team.

➡️ If you or someone you know would be a great fit, please reach out to us for more information or to **express your interest!** Together, we can continue to strengthen our community of counselors and support the students and families we serve.

🌟 **Teamwork makes the dream work – come be a part of it!**

✉️ **WSCA Has a New Email Address!**

If you haven't noticed yet, our **email address has officially changed**. Please update your records so you don't miss any important updates, event information, or opportunities to connect with us.

✅ **New Email: wsca@westernsuffolkcounselors.org**

This is the best way to reach us moving forward—whether you have questions, need support, or want to get involved.

Thank you for staying connected and being part of our WSCA community! 💙



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Every year WSCA
gives scholarships
to our local teens.
Please donate as
much as you can.
It goes a long way.

SCAN

Zelle

w***s@gmail.com



WSCA WSCA

@WSCA-WSCA

venmo



 Find us on
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www.westernsuffolkcounselors.org
wscs@westernsuffolkcounselors.org



 **TOGETHER WE GROW** 

As we step into a brand-new school year 🍏, let's remember that our greatest strength lies in **community** 🤝. Whether you are a school counselor, college advisor, or mental health clinician, your voice matters in shaping the future of our students and our profession ✨.

The Western Suffolk Counselors' Association isn't just an organization—it's a **movement** of dedicated professionals committed to growth, advocacy, and connection ✨. This year, we invite you to be part of that movement. Attend an event 📅, join a committee 💡, share your expertise 🗣️, or simply show up and connect with colleagues who share your passion 💬.

Together, we can make this year one of **collaboration, inspiration, and impact** 🌍💙. Let's lift each other up, celebrate our successes 🎉, and keep moving forward—for our students, our schools, and ourselves.

Let's make 2025–2026 our strongest year yet 💪📚.

We're excited to see you, work alongside you, and grow with you—because together, we are WSCA 🌱.

The **MORE**
you **REFLECT**
the **MORE**
you **LEARN**

TEAMWORK MAKES



THE DREAM WORK!

CELEBRATE
your **mistakes**
it means
you're
Learning

www.westernsuffolkcounselors.org



WSCA
Western Suffolk Counselors' Association

Save the Date

WESTERN SUFFOLK
COUNSELORS' ASSOCIATION
INVITES YOU TO THE

HOLIDAY HAPPENING

Monday, December 8, 2025

4:00PM - 8:00PM

**Captain Bill's
122 Ocean Avenue,
Bay Shore, NY 11706**

STAY TUNED FOR MORE
INFORMATION

www.westernsuffolkcounselors.org

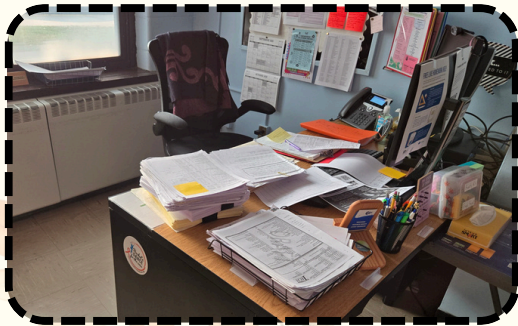
★ ***Caption This Corner*** ★

We're kicking off our first "Caption This Corner"! 😊 Take a look at the photo below and send us your most creative caption idea using this link:



Caption This Corner

📷 **This Edition's Photo:**



Sample Caption:

"Just another Monday in the counseling office..."

💡 The winning caption will be featured in our next newsletter (and maybe even on our social media)! Get ready to show off your humor, creativity, and counselor wit—**your caption might just make everyone's day!** 😊

CONNECT WITH US

Make sure to follow
"Western Suffolk Counselors
Association—WSCA" on FB.



We post relevant conferences, helpful tip sheets to reprint for your parents, students and teachers, latest news on regulation changes, solid resources for everyday practice, photos of our members at events, etc...

Please email Melissa Solomon with any questions or goodies to post. If you would like to be tagged in any photos, please let me know.

msolomon@copiague.net

www.westernsuffolkcounselors.org

***BELONG. CONNECT. LEAD.
THE WSCA MOVEMENT
STARTS WITH YOU!*** ✨

E V E N T S

FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
SEPTEMBER 29

FALL COLLEGE & CAREER FAIR
OCTOBER 16

LICAC CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 7

HOLIDAY HAPPENING
DECEMBER 8

**COUNSELORS PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT BREAKFAST**
FEBRUARY 26

SPRING COLLEGE & CAREER FAIR
APRIL 20

★ *See you soon!*