

STUDENT SERVICES NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND PUPIL SERVICES



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A word from the Director of the Student Services
- Meet our District School Counselors ~ School Counselor Appreciation Week (Feb. 2-6)
- What is the PAES Lab.....



Kristen C. Streightiff, M.Ed.
Director of Student Services

From the Desk of the Director of Student Services.....

As we continue our commitment to supporting every learner, this month's newsletter highlights the vital work happening across our Student Services and Guidance programs.

March is recognized as National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, a time to promote inclusion, celebrate abilities, and remove barriers to opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities. Established in 1987, this national observance reminds us of the importance of equitable access in education, employment, and daily life. We also recognize National School Counseling Week 2026, observed February 2-6, which shines a spotlight on the unique and essential contributions of our school counselors within our educational system.

In this edition, you will learn more about our comprehensive school counseling services, meet our outstanding team, and explore how programs like the PAES Lab help prepare students for meaningful future pathways. Together, these efforts reflect our shared mission to ensure every student feels supported, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

School Counseling Program Spotlight: Supporting Every Student, Every Step of the Way

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The Mount Union Area School District K–12 School Counseling Program is built on a comprehensive, collaborative approach that brings together students, families, educators, and community partners to support the whole child. Our counseling program promotes access, equity, and opportunity for all learners while helping students grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Guided by nationally recognized best practices, our counselors focus on three core areas of student development:

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our counseling team helps students understand themselves as learners and build the skills needed for long-term success. Through data-informed supports and individualized planning, counselors work to identify learning barriers and connect students with the resources they need to reach their full potential.

PERSONAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

We support students in developing strong interpersonal skills, cultural awareness, self-confidence, and resilience. Through classroom lessons, small group sessions, and individual counseling, students learn healthy coping strategies, decision-making skills, and positive ways to manage life's challenges.

CAREER & FUTURE READINESS

From middle school exploration to high school planning, counselors help students prepare for postsecondary pathways by connecting interests, strengths, and goals with meaningful academic and career opportunities.

Our counselors work with students through classroom guidance lessons, small support groups, and one-on-one counseling. Topics include friendship and social skills, changing families, grief and loss, healthy lifestyles, self-esteem, and emotional wellness. They also collaborate closely with special education teams to support individualized student goals and success plans.



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SCHOOL COUNSELOR TEAM

MEET OUR TEAM

We are proud to recognize the dedicated professionals who serve our students every day:

- **Kaitlyn Masser – Senior High Counselor**
- **Sarah Haefner – Junior High Counselor**
- **Nicole Crone - Elementary Counselor**
- **Michelle Shields – Guidance Secretary**

Together, this team works tirelessly to ensure that every student feels supported, heard, and empowered.

School Counselor Appreciation Week

February 2–6

During School Counselor Appreciation Week, we extend our sincere thanks to our guidance staff for their compassion, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to our students.

Their work plays a vital role in helping students thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

Please join us in celebrating and thanking our counselors for the difference they make every day!

National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

March 2026

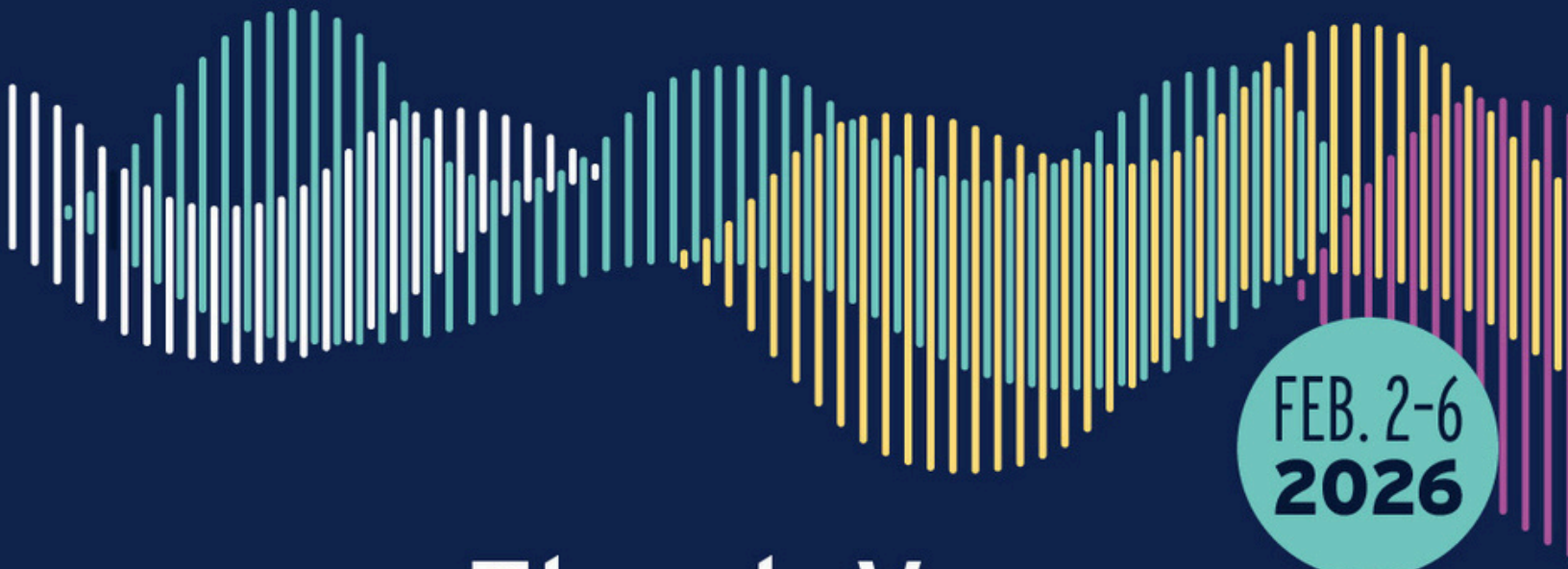
A time to promote inclusion, celebrate abilities, and remove barriers to opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities.

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NATIONAL **SCHOOL COUNSELING** WEEK

School Counselors Amplify Student Success

A decorative graphic consisting of numerous vertical bars of varying heights, arranged in a wave-like pattern across the middle of the poster. The bars are colored in shades of teal, yellow, and pink. A teal circle containing the text "FEB. 2-6 2026" is positioned on the right side of this graphic.

FEB. 2-6
2026

Thank You,
SCHOOL COUNSELORS



MUASD Elementary School Counselor

Nicole Crone

Nicole Crone is a Licensed Associate Professional Counselor (LAPC) and certified School Counselor with a Master's degree in Counseling from Liberty University. She brings more than 13 years of combined experience in the social work and mental health fields, including five years as an elementary school counselor and three years in private practice.

As a school counselor, Nicole provides comprehensive support to students through individual counseling, small-group counseling, and classroom social-emotional learning lessons. She is trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and has extensive experience helping children navigate trauma, anxiety, emotional regulation challenges, and behavioral concerns.

In her private practice work, Nicole uses a warm, supportive, and collaborative approach. She incorporates Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to help clients heal from trauma, build effective coping strategies, and reframe unhelpful thinking patterns. Nicole is passionate about empowering individuals of all ages to strengthen resilience, improve their mental health, and create meaningful, lasting change.





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Jr. High School School Counselor

Sarah Haefner

Hello, my name is Sarah Haefner. I am the School Counselor for the Mount Union Middle School. I received my bachelor's degree in Family and Child Studies, and Masters in School Counseling.

I have been with this school since 2023, prior to that I was a School Counselor at Las Vegas, NV Elementary/Middle School for 14 years. I'm excited for this new chapter living here in Pennsylvania and working at Mount Union. I'm committed to helping students reach their full academic and social emotional potential. It's fulfilling to see students grow and achieve their goals.

My philosophy is solution focused, academic, career, social and emotional development. I'm dedicated to making a positive impact on our students' lives at Mount Union Area School District!





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Sr. High School School Counselor

Kaitlyn Masser

Hello! My name is Kaitlyn Masser and I am the School Counselor at Mount Union Area High School. I am originally from Duncannon, PA, a small town north of Harrisburg.

I received my B.S. in Neuroscience and B.A. in Spanish Studies from Susquehanna University in 2022. I am currently obtaining my M.A. in Counseling from Messiah University.

As the School Counselor, I provide academic guidance to students, as well as college and career planning. I also help students manage their social and emotional needs throughout the day. Prior to starting my current role, I was the College & Career Adviser for Mount Union and Juniata Valley from 2022-2024. In that role, I assisted seniors in applying to college and financial aid, preparing for interviews and the ASVAB, and exploring different career paths.

Outside of work, I enjoy line dancing and exploring all that Huntingdon County has to offer.





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Guidance Secretary

Michelle Shields

I am an area native. I've lived in Mount Union my whole life. I graduated from Mount Union Area High School. I also attended the Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center.

I first started my career in Mount Union School District as a substitute paraeducator and cafeteria aide in 2013. In 2017, I was hired full time as a paraeducator working primarily with 8th grade students and staff. I started my current role as guidance secretary in September 2025. My current role has many duties. I support our amazing school counselors in any way I can, schedule military visitors, assist with college applications, send transcript for seniors and graduates and work with the SAP team and Safety Committee. I also provide education verifications for former students from years ago. I am the yearbook advisor for both the Senior High yearbook and Jr. High yearbook and for Jr. High PIC.

Outside of my job here, I also work part time at Designs by Danielle Hair Salon. I have a husband and 2 adult daughters, Mara and Madison. I enjoy traveling to warm locations, especially in the winter. I also enjoy planning events for students and our family. "



Additional Information



What is the PAES Lab?

The Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) Lab is a research-based, data-driven, age-appropriate assessment of potential employment. Students or 'employees' work on tasks that could be performed in community-based jobs. The assessment results can identify the student, or employee's strengths and barriers to successful employment. Our Senior High School participates in the PAES Lab organized by Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11. All TIU 11 schools utilize the Huntingdon County Career & Technology Center in Mill Creek, PA.

The PAES Lab is comprised of 5 different job component sections:

- Business/Marketing,
- Computer/Technology
- Construction/Industrial
- Processing/Production
- Consumer/Service

There are 264 total jobs that employees could do if they complete the entire system.

Aptitude scores are based on the amount of assistance needed to perform the job correctly, the quality of work (errors), the amount of time it took to complete the job and how many times the job needed to be repeated (number of trials) to complete the job correctly. Aptitude scores about 70% suggest semi-competitive/semi-independent performance with minimal or no support in vocational classes and entry level employment. Meanwhile, aptitude scores from 30-70% show a need for additional job skills training and supported work experience to help prepare for entry-level employment.

At the PAES Lab, a student can attempt or explore over a hundred jobs. Individualized accommodations will be made for each student to assist in their completion of the task. Modifications and accommodations will vary between students and the jobs they trial. Behavioral aspects such as work-ethic, interests, and social interactions with other 'employees' or students will also be observed and evaluated during one's time at the PAES Lab. The PAES Lab is an invaluable experience for students as they explore job options and discover their own strengths, weaknesses, and interests in future career pathways!

For additional information or questions, please contact:
Mrs. Kristen Streightiff
Director of Student Services

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STUDENT SERVICES NEWSLETTER

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Appointments can be
scheduled



**"WORKING TOGETHER TO
ACHIEVE STUDENT SUCCESS"**