

THE COUNSELOR'S CLASSROOM

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HELPING LOW ACHIEVER'S TO EXPERIENCE SUCCESS!

By Julia Taylor, MA of the [American School Counselor Association](#) for [GuidanceChannel.com](#)

Earlier this year I became overwhelmed by the number of students with failing grades on their report card. I called each student down to give them a pep talk and attempt to open their eyes to the school/future connection. While talking with these students I noticed they shared a number of common variables. They did not know how to study, had little parental support, lacked motivation, and/or were continuously discouraged by negativity from parents, teachers, administrators, and their peers. I wanted to find a way to reach out to these students and offer positive encouragement, so I created the RAIDER Club.

The RAIDER Club is an academic achievement club for low achieving students that utilizes study skills, time management, stress management, goal setting, and an award incentive to help motivate students to reach their fullest potential. After the first quarter, all freshmen students with unacceptable grades (2 or more D's or F's) were invited to participate in the club. The club would meet monthly during an extended homeroom period for the remainder of the academic year. The RAIDER club participants are provided with handouts and a learning session related to academic achievement during each session. At quarter breaks when report cards are sent home, we have an awards breakfast and recognize everybody in the club. Each student is honored with a certificate for putting forth effort and participating in the RAIDER Club. I found out that most of these students had never received a certificate for anything, let alone just trying to do well in school.

To monitor the students, I do "study hall sweeps" to see how they are doing. I make it a

point to go into the hall during class changes to just say hello to them. I also meet with their team teachers to check up on their grades, attendance, and behavior. In addition, each student in the club was given a progress report to take to their teachers at the end of each week to review their weekly progress. I leave them in the reception area of the school counseling office so the students can pick one up each week. At the end of the first semester, 85% of the students in the club had raised at least one of their grades. The students who use their progress reports weekly had greater success than those who did not. We recently held our second breakfast and 94% of students increased at least one grade, 67% increased multiple grades, and 14% made the honor roll.

Below you will find information and resources from our school's club to help you initiate your own version of it!

Loudoun County High School RAIDER Club

- Reaching goals
- Aspiring to be better students
- Instilling the belief that college is possible
- Defining futures
- Enticing students to achieve academic success
- Reinforcing outstanding citizenship

Purpose and Mission

The purpose of the RAIDER program is to provide freshman at Loudoun County High School with additional support to enrich their academic achievement. Through education and empowering students to become responsible for their education, students will be more likely to make wise decisions that promote school success.

The program will take place during extended homeroom periods on Friday. During the course of the year students will have the opportunity to learn:

- Academic confidence building;
- Decision making skills;
- Grade improvement;
- Study skills;
- How to set and reach goals;
- Time management;
- Stress Management;
- Outstanding citizenship; and
- The importance of school achievement/leadership as it relates to long-term life planning.

Target Population

The target population is high school freshman that are currently receiving a D or F in any

of their core academic classes (English, Science, and/or History). Once in the RAIDER program, standards will be set and adhered to in order to remain in the group.

Sample Introductory Student Letter

Dear Student:

If you are receiving this letter, you either have a D or F in one of your classes. Don't worry – you have the rest of the year to pull those grades up! In an effort to help you do so, I am cordially inviting you to participate in Loudoun County High School's RAIDER Club. The purpose of the RAIDER Club is to provide freshman at Loudoun County High School with additional support to enrich their academic achievement. During extended homeroom periods, the RAIDER Club will meet in the cafeteria and provide you with tools you can use to help bring your grades up. After each nine weeks, the RAIDER Club will have an awards breakfast (donuts!) for students who have maintained or improved their academic performance. In addition, selected students will receive a Citizenship Award for outstanding class behavior. The dates and topics of the RAIDER Club are listed below:

November 19th, 2004 – Intro/Grade Importance

December 17th, 2004 – Study Skills

January 28th, 2005 – Award Breakfast

February 18th, 2005 – Goal Setting

March 18th, 2005 – Time Management

April 22nd, 2005 – Award Breakfast

May 27th, 2005 – Stress Management/Exam Study Tips

Loudoun County High School is committed to providing students with every opportunity to succeed and is here to help you! We are looking forward to seeing you at our first meeting, November 19th, 2004. Please visit me in the School Counseling office if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Ms. Julia Taylor
Loudoun County High School
School Counseling Freshman Specialist

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Improve participants' performance through academic enrichment activities

- Objective 1.1: Improve or maintain participants' grades in school
- Objective 1.2: Improve participants' attendance in school
- Objective 1.3: Maintain participants' academic promotion
- Objective 1.4: Prevent participants' premature or unscheduled exit from school

Goal 2: Provide opportunities for participants to learn study skills, develop time management skills, and set goals related to their academic success

- Objective 2.1: Provide opportunities for participants to learn how to study effectively
- Objective 2.2: Provide opportunities for participants to appropriately balance their time
- Objective 2.3: Provide opportunities for participants to set obtainable, realistic goals
- Objective 2.4: Provide opportunities for participants to grasp the importance and relevance of acceptable grades

Goal 3: Provide students with academic incentives through awards

- Objective 3.1: Recognize students who maintain or raise grades
- Objective 3.2: Recognize students in newsletter who maintain or raise grades
- Objective 3.3: Recognize students who display outstanding citizenship
- Objective 3.4: Provide students with award breakfast after each marking period

Information Collected Through Progress Reports

Each of the weekly progress reports include the following:

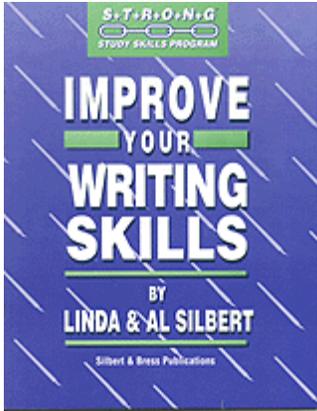
- Student Name
- Date
- Subject
- Teacher
- Grade to date
- Weekly grades
- Missing assignments
- Attendance/Tardies
- Comments, suggestions, recommendations

Accountability

Grade, discipline, and attendance reports will be monitored throughout the remainder of the year. Students will be given a pre-survey about the topics to be discussed, and a post-survey upon completion of the school year. Data will be analyzed and reviewed upon completion of program to determine overall success.

Editor's Note: If you are a member of the American School Counselors Association, you may download additional supplemental lessons and handouts from the RAIDER Club at <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/>.

FEATURED RESOURCE: THE STRONG STUDY SKILLS SET



This set of four books is designed to help students improve their academic standing while developing the learning skills that will increase confidence and self-esteem. The four activity books systematically approach study skills, reading, writing, and math with easy-to-learn techniques and hands-on exercises from real-life situations. Students will learn how to manage their time more efficiently and get more out of the time they spend studying. To find out how you can purchase these powerful tools to help students succeed in school, [click here!](#)

ABOUT GUIDANCECHANNEL.COM

[GuidanceChannel.com](#), a brand of [Sunburst Visual Media](#), is an online portal that offers newsletters and an online magazine including insightful articles, thought-provoking interviews, tips website reviews, and other content that addresses the social, emotional, and educational issues facing today's youth. We are an educational publishing company that develops award-winning guidance and health videos, DVDs games, activity books, curricula, pamphlets and print materials for the K-12 school market.

For over 30 years, Sunburst Visual Media has been producing the highest quality guidance and health programs. From the start, Sunburst Visual Media's mission has been to enhance learning and help teachers get students thinking and talking about the difficult issues they face every day. Sunburst Visual Media's reputation as the recognized leader in the field of guidance and health, is built on its ability to present tough-to-teach topics in a realistic, non-judgmental, and captivating manner. Sunburst Visual Media's prides itself on consistently providing educators with award-winning programs in such areas as: anger management, bullying and harassment, character education, violence prevention, conflict resolution, drug abuse prevention, sex education, career education, health, and parenting skills.

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ABOUT JULIA TAYLOR, MA

Julia Taylor is a freshman counselor for Loudoun County Public Schools in Virginia and is the Regional Conference Chairperson for the Virginia School Counselor Association

(VSCA).

ABOUT THE AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

Professional school counselors everywhere share the same vision to support their schools by serving their students. School counselors know that guiding students toward personal and social development leads to improved academic achievement. Through their partnership with principals and teachers, school counselors help prepare today's students to become tomorrow's adults.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) responds to school counselors' unique needs, helping them grow individually as professionals and providing them with real tools to guide their students. As an international nonprofit organization founded in 1952, ASCA has the benefit of foresight and hindsight. It has grown to fit counselors' changing needs through social and educational movements from desegregation to standardized testing. Responding to the needs of counselors as voiced by counselors has enabled ASCA to remain vital and forward-thinking.

ASCA serves as the voice of school counselors on Capitol Hill and helps members ensure their voices are heard in state legislatures. ASCA has active government affairs representatives who monitor activities in Congress, the Department of Education and throughout Washington to advocate on behalf of school counselors' interests: funding, certification, student-to-counselor ratios and more.

A full-color bimonthly magazine, *School Counselor* provides practical information and how-to articles to help school counselors help their students and themselves. Each issue has a focus on something school counselors care about, from public relations to grief counseling, as well as departments and columns covering a range of topics. Professional School Counseling is ASCA's award-winning bimonthly academic journal, providing peer-reviewed articles on school counseling theory, research, practice and techniques. The journal and the magazine together provide counselors with the most well-rounded and up-to-date information in the field.

For more information, visit <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/> or call 703.683.ASCA.

FOR ADDITIONAL NEWSLETTERS...

If you've found *The Counselor's Classroom* useful and informative, you may also be interested in subscribing to some of our other newsletters. *Dr. Playwell's Newsletter* is a unique newsletter full of play therapy techniques to help you address the social and emotional needs of children and young adolescents. *FYI From Wellness* offers practical tips and suggestions for use in the clinic or classroom written by professionals from a variety of disciplines. *The Guidance Channel Zine* is a monthly online magazine that includes interviews, website reviews, statistics and articles by many national organizations such as the National Association of School Psychologists, the American

School Counselor Association and National S.A.V.E. (Students Against Violence Everywhere). To subscribe to these newsletters, [click here!](#)

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