



Lacey Spring Elementary School

Placement Description

Public elementary school in the Rockingham County School district that offers practical foundational experience working with students ages 4-11.

Intern or Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

- One-on-one activities with students
- Possible group counseling
- Meetings with parents and teachers
- Teaching academic, social/ emotional, and career concepts to large groups of students

Contact Information

- Contact Person: Katie (Greene) Kegley, School Counselor
- Address: 8621 N. Valley Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22802
- Telephone: (540) 433-7819
- Email Address: kgreene@rockingham.k12.va.us
- Website: <http://ses.rockingham.k12.va.us/>



Read about students' experiences at this site below:

Fall 2022 – Alissa Kenney

During the Fall 2022 semester, I experienced the life of Mrs. Katie Greene Kegley, the school counselor at Lacey Spring Elementary School (LSES). Every Tuesday and Thursday morning, I would take the fifteen-minute drive from the James Madison University area, north on I-81, and past countless farms to reach the school. The seemingly endless number of animals, and beautiful view of the mountains, was a delight to see each of those mornings. Upon arrival my first day, it was evident that every staff member works to carry out the school's motto, "we strive to work towards healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthy relationships," as well as their school philosophy, "every child is entitled to a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting." Every staff member works their hardest to ensure that every student's basic needs are met and that LSES is a consistent, safe, and caring environment.

I received many opportunities to also carry out the motto and philosophy of the school. Since I joined the students and staff of LSES for a full school day on Tuesdays and Thursdays, this began as the students arrived. The counselor and I would stand at the front entrance and greet each student with open arms. It was obvious from the smiles on the students' faces that they loved coming to school and they sought great comfort in the staff. Most students would be seen pinballing from one staff member to another to greet and hug them as a positive way to start off their school day. Even the students who had a rough previous school day, would go in for their hugs and be reminded that every day is a new day and that they are in charge of how today will go for them. With approximately 220 students at LSES and grade levels ranging from Pre-Kindergarten to Fifth grade, it is a very close-knit community where many staff members have watched the students grow and develop from beginning to end. As an outsider going in, I worried that inserting myself into such an environment would be difficult and meaningful connections would take time to develop, but every member of the LSES community, students and staff, welcomed me with open arms.

Beyond the original greeting of the day, the school counselor's daily schedule was a vague and flexible one. As someone that tends to stick to routine and planning, this was a new, yet very positive, experience for me. I quickly learned to love the spontaneity and the excitement that came with no two days being similar. I received the opportunity to observe, and eventually take part in, one-on-one and group counseling sessions. These sessions could be established in several ways. One of the ways could be at the teacher's discretion. If a student is disrupting the class, mentions something worrisome, or needs a break, the teacher can page the school counselor and request for her to retrieve the student immediately or check on them at some point throughout the school day. A second way is that a student practices emotional awareness and requests to briefly speak with or have lunch with the school counselor. They then meet in a way that makes the student most comfortable and discuss whatever topic is on their mind. Lastly, another possible way a counseling session could occur is in passing. A casual conversation or



observation of a student could lead to them receiving more attention from the school counselor than originally planned. Along with these counseling sessions, I also observed phone calls with parents/guardians, other school counselors, and Child Protective Services (CPS). The school counselor allowed me to be a part of every aspect of her career, so I could come out of this opportunity with an authentic, unembellished experience. Another major part of being a LSES school counselor is educating students bi-weekly on academic, social/emotional, career, or more personalized concepts per the school counselor's or teacher's judgement. These topics can include emotional regulation, self-esteem, accountability, being a good listener or good friend, bullying, etc. A more personalized lesson that I was able to assist with was an emotional regulation lesson for one of the First-grade classes. I worked alongside the school counselor and social worker to educate the students on how to identify and regulate certain emotions through the "Zones of Regulation" approach. This included age-appropriate techniques such as belly breathing, grounding through the senses, or talking to someone. This experience, along with many others, taught me the importance of being proactive when possible, and reactive when necessary.

For my contribution project, I was both proactive and reactive. Based off several comments from a Fifth-grade girl, I decided to focus on the effects of nutrition on the self-esteem of children living in low-income households. With low-income families being a trend at LSES, my contribution project was relevant beyond this case study. It touched on the importance of adequate nutrition during childhood development, the difficulties faced by families who do not earn enough income to buy nutritionally rich food, and how the lack of nutrition can negatively impact a child's self-esteem. My reactive intervention took on a psychoeducation approach as I focused on positive self-talk/positive affirmations. My proactive intervention included researching and creating nine pamphlets dedicated to varying resources in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham County area that could be attained by families of LSES and other surrounding schools.

Overall, my time with Mrs. Kegley and the Lacey Spring Elementary School community was an eye-opening one. I applied to Field Placement due to the uncertainty my future held, and this opportunity did not disappoint in educating me on what it is like to be a school counselor. This experience was as authentic as it could get and has assisted in adding this career as a part of my future options. The school counselor kept me in the loop with every school-related conversation whether I was present for it or not. I never felt in the dark about anything and was encouraged to ask questions about any topic. Along with Field Placement, I was also enrolled in Counseling Psychology during the semester. Mrs. Kegley was eager to discuss the material I was currently learning in that course and applied it to the real-life situations taking place at LSES. For example, she explained the importance of confidentiality and ethics as a school counselor and was a role model on how to follow through with it, even if others outside of the field of counseling were advising otherwise. Truthfully, I cannot say enough positive things about this site as a part of Field Placement and how grateful I am for the countless amount of knowledge and experience I gained from spending my time at Lacey Spring Elementary School. I highly recommend it to any Psychology student that is even slightly considering being a school counselor as a career choice.



Fall 2021 – Jessica Tutton

Over this past Fall 2021 semester, I had the eye-opening experience to work alongside Mrs. Katie Greene Kegley, the school counselor at Lacey Spring Elementary School (LSES). Lacey Spring is located approximately fifteen minutes north of JMU, with the addition of a scenic route that I had the chance to enjoy each morning traveling to my placement site, I must add. The school is committed to carrying out their school motto of striving to “work towards healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthy relationships,” as well as following their school philosophy of providing a “well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting” in all that they do. Through their student-centered approach, the faculty at Lacey Spring Elementary are dedicated to assisting their students’ growth, along with providing each student with what they need in order to succeed each and every day. With this being said, it becomes automatically evident how much the faculty cares for each and every one of their students.

Each morning at LSES began by welcoming the students with open arms as they walked through the front doors. This experience was a wonderful way to start each morning as it reinforced the connections that the students had with the staff at LSES – the smiles on their faces showed it all. Lacey Spring Elementary School serves approximately 227 Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth grade students for the 2021-2022 school year. As a smaller student body, I believe that this school in particular allowed for deeper and more meaningful connections to be made between the students and staff, which was something that I particularly appreciated. During my time, I had the opportunity to possess several duties, all of which revolved around understanding what it meant to be an effective and loving elementary school counselor. Though each day was different, the tasks that I was involved in allowed me to see first-hand what a day in the life of a school counselor would look like. Every day usually consisted of checking in on various classrooms, along with providing our assistance if need be throughout the entirety of the school day. In addition, the school counselor typically gave lessons to each grade that were not only specialized to students’ needs (e.g., feelings, self-esteem, bullying, friendship, etc.), but that also followed the school’s character counts program (6-week periods for each character word – responsibility, respect, caring, fairness, trustworthiness, citizenship). Observing these lessons was one of my favorite parts of my experience, as they typically consisted of a discussion on the given topic, an educational read aloud that related to the topic, and then an activity that allowed the students to put what they were learning into real-world practice.

In addition to these lessons, I had the opportunity to be involved in co-facilitating both individual and girl/boy group counseling sessions. Individual counseling sessions generally included speaking one-on-one with students who are causing disruption within the classroom or who seek out the counselor’s assistance themselves. Here, we discuss the issue pertaining to their reasoning of needing help. On the other hand, girl/boy group counseling sessions tended to comprise of about five students who are met with during their lunch period. Here, topics that the



group members express needing assistance with are discussed (e.g., self-confidence/esteem, respect, mindfulness, women's empowerment, etc.). During my time at LSES, I also had the chance to work individually with three students – two Kindergarten boys and one 3rd grade girl. While working with these children, my duties included observing behavior in their classrooms and/or during play time and lunch. Other ways that I was able to interact with them was through pulling them from class to do activities such as mental health games, discussion, art therapy, etc. in the counseling room. I really enjoyed being able to interact with all of the students as it allowed me to form deep, meaningful connections with them. The 3rd grade girl in particular stood out to me, as she would run up to me, bombard me with hugs, and express comfort in our relationship by telling me about her own personal life. Our strong relationship was also exemplified through her asking after my whereabouts on days that I was not present at LSES, as well as her parents reporting during their meeting with my supervisor that they had heard all about me from their daughter. Overall, I really enjoyed interacting with the children, as I noticed them to open up and allow me to assist in any way that I could. Other ways in which I was involved at LSES include creating bulletin boards/posters to represent certain ideas, research topics at hand, create snack bags, listen in on calls from parents or report issues to CPS, and sit in on general body school counselor meetings.

For my contribution project, I focused on researching and planning/presenting the benefits of practicing healthy habits (e.g., the importance of nutrition, exercise and sleep) along with healthy coping strategies in one's daily life and on children's functioning. In doing so, I found results showing that lacking in these habits can lead to negative effects, including harmful behaviors (e.g., poor lifestyle choices), mental health issues/distress, poor academic performance and so on. Based on this research, I was able to teach a lesson to both of the Third-grade classes on the importance of healthy habits in general. My project consisted of an educational read called "Grow Strong! A book about healthy habits." This book was also followed by a healthy versus unhealthy habits poster board that I created where students would distinguish between different examples of each. To end the lesson, I had the students create their own individual healthy habits pie chart that explains how they are currently involved in healthy habits in their own lives.

Going into this experience, I simply only knew of my strong desire to work with children one day. However, my Field Placement experience at Lacey Spring Elementary School solidified my decision having the ultimate career goal of becoming a school counselor in my near future. My experience at Lacey Spring was more than I could have ever asked for. My supervisor, Mrs. Kegley, continuously provided the support and comfort that I needed in order to feel engaged throughout the school day. In addition, Mrs. Kegley was always so helpful and made sure to listen to my questions along with being sure to provide me with informal feedback. Lastly, I respected her willingness to allow me to explore my interests and take charge of my responsibilities while at this placement. Throughout this process, she also checked in regularly to make sure that I was always on track. In doing so, I feel as though Mrs. Kegley truly embraces the "warm and supportive" environment that they strive to have at LSES. I feel as though my



appreciation for this experience is also exemplified through my constant excitement of waking up each morning and feeling excited to start my day at LSES throughout my entire time here.

Overall, my Field Placement experience at Lacey Spring Elementary was nothing short of amazing. During the time that I was able to work with Mrs. Kegley, the students, and the staff at LSES, I grew fond of their presence and was consistently amazed by their accepting nature. Learning about the day-to-day of a school counselor was inspiring and eye-opening to me as it validated my passion for wanting to help children in need. In conclusion, my positive experience at LSES helped me learn what it means to be a successful school counselor, along with introducing the many roles that they play. My personal long-term goal is to go to graduate school this upcoming Fall semester and become a school counselor myself one day. With that being said, I believe that this placement, and especially my supervisor, Mrs. Kegley, has not only provided me with the advice and resources that contributed to an overall enriching experience, but also confirmed that goal for me by giving me experiences that will help me accomplish this. All in all, being a Field Placement student at Lacey Spring Elementary School has only strengthened my passion for working with students within a school. Moreover, I would recommend it to anyone looking for a hands-on experience with students in a school setting. Altogether, the knowledge and skills that I have obtained from working alongside Mrs. Kegley and her students have helped shape a remarkable foundation to begin my school counseling career.

Spring 2021 – Irene Petersen

This past semester I had the opportunity to work alongside the School Counselor at Lacey Spring Elementary School, Mrs. Kegley. This school has such a warm and friendly atmosphere that is evident as soon as you walk in the door. Their school philosophy is that “every child is entitled to a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a supportive classroom setting.” The faculty at Lacey Spring are devoted to helping their students grow and ensuring they have everything they need in order to succeed. It is really evident that everyone at this school cares about their students. Every morning began with greeting the students as they walked in. I loved starting the days like this and witnessing the connections Mrs. Kegley had with all of the students who attend this school. Lacey Spring consists of about 220 enrolled students ranging from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. Since this is a smaller population, it made the school feel very close knit and allowed for deeper connections to be made with the students which was something I really appreciated. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the older students only came in two days a week until the end of the semester when they brought all the students back four times a week.

While being at Lacey Spring these past few months, I had the opportunity to see first-hand what an elementary school counselor’s day to day looks like. As I mentioned earlier, we always began by greeting the students in the morning as they came into school. While everyday was different, most of the time the days consisted of going to various classrooms and teaching the students lessons about the school’s character counts classrooms, meeting with



individual students, and helping out wherever we were needed around the school. I really enjoyed observing the lessons that Mrs. Kegley would teach. Typically, these lessons consisted of a discussion about the topic, reading a book that relates to the topic, then having the students participate in an activity to put what they were learning to practice. In addition to these lessons, we assisted the music teacher in leading drum circles for fifth graders. This was something I looked forward to and enjoyed seeing how much fun the students had with it. I also had the opportunity to have three different buddies in three different grade levels. One of my buddies was in pre-kindergarten, one was in kindergarten, and one was in fourth grade. I got to eat lunch with them, sit in their classrooms with them while they did activities, go to recess with them, and pull them from class to do activities in the counseling room. I loved being able to interact with the students in this way and it really allowed me to form meaningful connections with them. In addition to meeting with the buddies that I was assigned to, I had the opportunity to have lunch once a week with another student in first grade with Mrs. Kegley and the graduate intern she had as well. I always looked forward to meeting with this student and since we had a scheduled time to meet every Monday, it was really amazing to see the progress that she made. From the first day we met with her to the last day, you could really tell how much she grew and became more comfortable by opening up more and coming out of her shell. Most of our other time consisted of checking in on students and classrooms. We would go wherever we were needed and help out however needed. With that, if needed Mrs. Kegley would have to make CPS calls for students which she allowed me to listen in on. It was a very interesting experience being able to see and hear how that process works. In addition, we spent a lot of time with students during recess and a lot of time in the pre-kindergarten room. Once the coronavirus rules changed and students were allowed to eat in the cafeteria again, we would also help out in there.

With all of this, due to the coronavirus, there were no students on Wednesdays, so these days looked a little bit different. These days were mostly spent planning and working on projects for the school. Mrs. Kegley would also have meetings with other school counselors in the district that I would get to listen in on. It was really interesting being able to hear these meetings and I felt it was valuable to hear what was happening for other school counselors at different schools as well as at my own site. In addition, these days were also spent collaborating with teachers and other faculty about different students and anything that was going on with the school. I also spent a lot of time on projects such as creating bulletin boards, making games for the students, and researching activities. One other major thing that I did on these days without students is make snack bags. Community partners donate food items for students who participate in this program to have snacks for the week. Every week I would put these bags together and deliver them to the classrooms for the students to have.

For my contribution project I researched about implementing a drug prevention program in elementary schools. I found a plethora of information on drug curriculums that have been unsuccessful, ones that have been successful, as well as components that make up a successful program. Based off of this research, I made a wall that had a beach oriented towards drug prevention. It consisted of the ocean with drug information as well as the shore that had things that can protect you from drug use. In addition, I put together a lesson to teach to fourth and fifth graders that included all of the aspects of a successful drug prevention program.



Overall, I had a very positive experience during my time at Lacey Spring Elementary School. I learned so much about what it means to be a school counselor and the various roles that they play. Furthermore, I learned a lot about how to be flexible and gained invaluable hands-on experiences with children. I was able to form connections and relationships with students as well as faculty. The environment at the school was always one that was warm and inviting. My favorite part of the experience was spending time interacting with the students. In addition, Mrs. Kegley was always extremely helpful and taught me so much during my time there. The only thing I would say I disliked was I wish I could have seen some of the students more, however, due to the pandemic everything was a little different.

My long-term goal is to go to graduate school to become a school psychologist. I believe that this placement has confirmed that goal for me and has provided me with experiences that will help me accomplish this. It made me realize that I have a passion for working with students in a school setting. I was able to grow and learn so much at this site and would recommend it to anyone looking for a hands-on experience with students in a school setting.

Spring 2020 – Hayley Hughes

This semester, I had the opportunity to complete Field Placement at Lacey Spring Elementary School with the school counselor, Katie Greene. Lacey's school philosophy states that "every child is entitled to a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting." From the moment I walked into Lacey on my first day, I could see this philosophy at work. It is evident that all of the staff members care deeply about the students, and they are devoted to supplying them the warm and supportive setting that students need. Not only did all of the staff members greet the students warmly, but everyone welcomed me warmly, and I felt comfortable right away. Lacey serves approximately 230 students in grades Pre-K through fifth, and being a smaller school allows the staff members to foster close relationships with all of the students. I will never forget my first morning at Lacey when Ms. Greene had to supervise the students who were being dropped off by their parents. As the students walked past us toward the front door of the school, Ms. Greene greeted each of them and called them by name. I asked her if she knew the name of every student in the school. She responded with a casual "yeah," and told me that I would quickly pick up on a lot of names. While I did get to know a lot of students fairly quickly, I was still always impressed with Ms. Greene's ability to truly know each student. She knew so much more about them than their names; Ms. Greene knew each student's story, she could tell whether or not they were having a good day, and she knew what they needed before they even asked her. It was clear that Ms. Greene was devoted to her students, and in turn, her students admired and trusted her.

While at Lacey, some of my time was spent observing Ms. Greene and discovering exactly what it is like to be an elementary school counselor. I was able to join her in tasks like drop-off duty, walking Pre-K students to the buses, and checking on teachers to make sure everything in their classroom was going smoothly. I was also able to observe things like individual counseling sessions, group counseling, and morning circle lessons. Ms. Greene's role



as an elementary school counselor is unique because she does not teach guidance lessons in the classroom like most elementary school counselors do. However, she does teach morning circle lessons. Each day, Ms. Greene will join one classroom during their morning circle time. She delivers a short lesson that is derived from the character counts word the school is focusing on at that time. Teaching these short lessons rather than full-length guidance lessons allows Ms. Greene to spend time with all of the students in the building, while focusing most of her time on directly counseling the students who need her services most. Unfortunately, my time at Lacey was cut short, so I was not able to deliver any morning circle lessons myself. I did create morning circle lesson plans though, and these focused on all of the character words, social emotional development, and other guidance related topics. Ms. Green has shared these with all of the teachers at Lacey, so anyone can use them in their classrooms when needed.

While I was at Lacey, the majority of my time was spent working with my buddies. I worked closely with three students, one in Pre-K and two in fourth grade. Before this field placement, I had a lot of experience working with early elementary aged children. I was very excited to hear that I had a buddy in Pre-K, because that was my specialty. However, I was a little nervous about working with the fourth graders. I had never worked with this age group before, so I was not sure how they would react to me. I quickly learned though, that older elementary students are just as awesome as the younger students. The students warmed up to me almost immediately, and I instantly felt comfortable working with them. Each day at Lacey, I was able to eat lunch with my buddies and their classmates. I would also visit them at recess and join them in their classrooms. I also met with my fourth-grade buddies in either Ms. Greene's classroom or the mindfulness room. We would play games, do mindfulness activities, and just talk about whatever was on their minds. When I met with my Pre-K buddy, I would visit his classroom and assist in any way I could. I helped him with class projects, made sure he played well with his friends, and helped him with basic life skills such as table manners or making sure he washed his hands after using the bathroom. Meetings with each of my buddies were very different and I feel that this contrast in my experience will benefit me in the future.

As I said earlier, Lacey was such a warm and welcoming place, and I am incredibly thankful for the time I was able to spend there. The students and the staff were very accepting and understanding, and I felt like I could jump in anywhere and help out. Honestly, I experienced no drawbacks during my time at Lacey. I loved every minute of working with the students and getting to see what it would be like to work in an elementary school. I was able to experience not only the role of the school counselor, but also many different facets of the school as a whole. I went into this experience hoping that I would come out knowing whether or not I want to be an elementary school counselor. I could definitely see myself being a school counselor, but ironically enough, I am now considering teaching elementary school instead. I know that I would be happy working with children in any capacity, but I found myself especially drawn to spending time in the classroom. I loved observing lessons and working with my Pre-K buddy and his classmates during their instructional time. I also found that I really enjoyed putting together lesson plans. I know that regardless of the path I choose to take, this experience will benefit me in numerous ways. Though it was cut short, words cannot express how thankful I am for the time



I was able to spend at Lacey. This school truly is a special place and I can guarantee that anyone would enjoy their experience here!

Spring 2020 – Emily Pace

For my final semester at JMU, I had the opportunity to work alongside Lacey Spring Elementary School's school counselor, Katie Greene. Lacey Spring is located about 15 minutes north of JMU, tucked away off of I-81. The school is dedicated to carrying out their mission of providing a "well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting" in everything they do. In addition to traditional classroom services, LSES also offers a variety of programs designed to allow students to opportunity for leadership and interpersonal skill development. From the book cart, which allows students to opportunity to buy books for 25 cents apiece, to Morning News, led by 4th grade students, to the student-run school store, Lacey Spring provides numerous opportunities for students to find their niche. The teachers and staff create a warm and welcoming environment from the first moment a student walks in the doors. One of my favorite parts of the day was standing in the main entrance as students arrived in the morning and seeing the connection Ms. Greene, and every teacher, had with each and every one of them.

My ultimate career goal is becoming a school counselor, which was one of the reasons I chose Lacey. During my time, I had the opportunity to work individually with 4 students on topics like body language, self-confidence, and respect. All of my individual work was enhanced by Ms. Greene providing advice and resources that contributed to a more enriching experience for my buddies. Over the short time I was able to work with them, I grew so fond of their presence and amazed by their accepting nature of a college student just wanting to be their friend. In addition to working with my buddies, I also attended morning meetings each day and observed as Ms. Greene taught lessons and completed activities with the class. These community circles were the teaching time for Ms. Greene and typically consisted of discussion, reading a book, and an activity with more discussion. The lessons stemmed from the Character Counts program RCPS follows, consisting of lessons on topics like fairness, respect, trustworthiness, citizenship, etc. and ways students can implement their knowledge on these topics in the classroom and at home. The day-to-day of a school counselor was hectic and overwhelming at times but it really helped me better understand the realistic role of a school counselor. Ms. Greene also always made sure to explain what was going on and answer questions that we had during the less frantic moments.

For my contribution project I created a Disability Awareness Day preparation curriculum. One need Ms. Greene had been hoping to work on was increasing student's knowledge on disabilities. Because many of the students at Lacey are not exposed to a lot of diversity, many of them do not understand why a student acts a certain way if they have a disability. My project consisted of lesson plans on different disabilities, as well as activities and school-wide inclusion lessons, posters, and bulletin board displays to enhance students' understanding of disabilities they may see in their classroom. I planned to lead morning circle lessons with some of my contribution project lessons but my time was cut short at LSES because of the COVID-19



breakout. Although I was not able to implement my project, working to create lesson plans and researching different ways to teach provided skills that I will need in my future career. In addition to my contribution project, Ms. Greene also allowed myself and the other interns to contribute our own ideas for Character Counts lessons for her to use in the future.

Many students at Lacey Spring do not have supportive home lives, because of this, I was able to sit in on individual and group counseling sessions in Ms. Greene's classroom and learned about reporting things to CPS, calling parents/guardians, and the student organization system Lacey uses. Although these sessions were sometimes difficult to be a part of, they helped introduce the harder sides of being a school counselor and the realities of working in a low-income area. This also extended into my role as an intern where I helped create a Resource Guide for families that are in need of community support. When not attending to my buddies or observing Ms. Greene, I created bulletin board displays or posters and assisted in the pre-k classroom. The pre-k classroom was one of the most exciting yet overwhelming places to be. Still, I was grateful to observe and also make connections with the students and teachers for such a young age group. One lesson myself and the other interns were looking forward to was doing a mindfulness/yoga lesson with them. We planned to teach them breathing exercises then do a painting activity where students blow bubbles onto paper with paint to see their breath. One of the most amazing takeaways from this experience was how willing and welcoming all the teachers were to us interns. Lacey Spring is such a small school so all of the teachers are connected and supportive of each other and anyone that student teaches or interns.

My experience at Lacey Spring was more than I could have ever asked for. Ms. Greene goes above and beyond to make sure you're comfortable and engaged at all times and truly embraces the "warm and supportive" environment to all that come through the door. I appreciated her willingness to let us take charge of our responsibilities and explore the school in our own time. At the beginning of my experience, I was overwhelmed by the freedom and lack of structure provided but Ms. Greene was very supportive and checked in regularly to make sure none of us were drowning. Although the COVID-19 shut down cut my in-person time short, I was amazed by the immediate support and encouragement Ms. Greene provided all of the interns at Lacey. Less than 24 hours after finding out our time had ended, I had an email from Ms. Greene offering her assistance and encouraging us to find ways to continue our experience from a far. Lacey Spring was truly the best placement I could have asked for. The knowledge and skills I gained from observing and working alongside Ms. Greene created a wonderful foundation to begin my school counseling career on. If you're looking for a place to grow and learn more than you'd ever expect, Lacey Spring is that place.

Fall 2019 – Megan Barnes

Over the past semester I have had the privilege to work alongside Lacey Spring Elementary's School Counselor, Ms. Greene. The mission statement at Lacey Spring is "to provide a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting." Throughout my experience I have seen this statement



exhibited in numerous ways. The faculty and staff expresses love and care for every single student that enters the building. Lacey Spring provides students with interpersonal skills as well as the academics to live independent and successful lives. This school serves approximately 240 students ranging from pre-K to fifth grade. Due to the smaller school size, faculty and staff are able to individualize academic plans and additional services such as intensive reading, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, therapeutic day treatment, special education, and school counseling.

Throughout my time I was able to spend time learning the duties and responsibilities of a school counselor. One key way that this site differs from the other sites is that Ms. Greene no longer teaches classes so she gets more time investing individually into the students. A flexible schedule allows Ms. Greene to be available in times of crisis as a form of intervention for the children.

At my site I was assigned 4 students to work with individually. My day to day responsibilities included working one on one with my buddies in different settings including lunch, recess, and the counseling room, attending morning circles that served to inform students of the character count of the month, observing counseling sessions that Ms. Greene led, as well as assisting teachers in a variety of classrooms. Many of the kids that I worked with were identified as at risk by Ms. Greene due to different aversive experiences. While working with my buddies, I noticed that students lacked skills that they can use to regulate their emotions. For my contribution project I aided the education of staff and students in mindfulness techniques. Mindfulness based practices are an evidence based approach to emotional regulation. Rockingham County also requires counselors to teach students about the 6 pillars of character. Due to the fact that Ms. Greene does not have set teaching times required, she would informally discuss the character counts pillars in morning circle time. The informal discussions allowed for students to engage in back and forth conversation and discuss ways they feel they can implement the character counts in school and at home. I also had the opportunity to sit in on CPS calls and learn more about the process of documentation and reporting. When I wasn't working with students, I created bulletin boards and worked on materials for numerous different events such as warm-up-winter and the Veterans Day assembly.

Overall I really enjoyed my field placement experience at Lacey Spring. The warm and inviting atmosphere of the school is one that cannot be beat. Every single staff member exhibits enthusiasm and optimism each and every day which makes going to this placement a fun experience rather than a chore. One thing that I did struggle with at this placement was the lack of structure. Due to the fact that being a school counselor includes many demands, there will be times when Ms. Greene is not available and you have to be able to take initiative and find work that you can do to be productive.

I went into the field placement experience as an opportunity to explore possible careers due to the fact that I was unsure what I career I wanted to pursue. I always knew that I wanted to work with elementary age kids but I wasn't exactly sure what I wanted to do. During this experience, I learned that I really enjoy working with kids who have challenging behaviors which solidified my decision to pursue a career in Applied Behavioral Analysis over school counseling. However, I feel that learning ways to communicate with kids and staff members are



skills that I can take with me into this career. The ability to collaborate interprofessionally amongst school staff will benefit me as a behavioral analyst especially if I decide on a school placement in this career.

Spring 2019 – Jade McVay

Although Lacey Spring Elementary School (LSES) has various missions in order to meet the goals and needs of its students, parents, and staff, the core of those missions is “to provide a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting.” Lacey Spring Elementary is a small school located approximately twenty minutes from James Madison University and serves 250 students in a given year. These students range from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade, and, due to the school’s size, are able to develop strong friendships amongst one another and receive individualized help from teachers and staff. Besides standard academic teaching, a variety of services are offered at the school such as special education, counseling, speech therapy, and small group reading, each of which assists in accelerating a child’s learning and growth. Additionally, faculty members work hard daily to instill self-confidence, knowledge, exceptional character, and a passion for making the world a better place in their students while also assuring them that they are deeply loved and cared for. I had the privilege of shadowing Lacey Spring’s school counselor, Katie Greene, who helped me better understand the many roles, responsibilities, and obligations that comprise her position.

Throughout my internship, I mentored 3 students (each of differing grades) who were identified by Ms. Greene as needing additional attention. Two times a week I pulled each of these students from their classrooms for 20-25 minutes and would engage in interactive activities with them such as playing a board game, eating lunch, drawing, or simply opening up a discussion that was pertinent to their life. In addition to the students that I was assigned, I spent a great deal of my time with the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes which also had a handful of students who required additional attention. More specifically, I helped them with table manners, socialization, and basic academic skills such as shapes and counting. When I was not mentoring a student, I was observing Ms. Greene teach the six pillars of the character counts program to each of the classes in the school and counsel students one-on-one. In order to assist Ms. Greene in her lessons on the six pillars, I created bulletin boards, posters, and researched potential activities that could complement them. Towards the end of the internship I was given the opportunity to present a lesson concerning trustworthiness to a class of 1st graders which involved reading a book and having them participate in an engaging artistic activity.

From my very first day of interning at Lacey Spring, I noticed that the school exudes more warmth, support, and kindness than any other environment I’ve been in. Each day I was greeted with smiles from the kids, their parents, and faculty. Even more so, the school’s principal, Mrs. May, would go around and ask each student to state one thing that made their day great. Mrs. May’s leadership, as well as the rest of the faculty’s, taught me how to become a better leader and set a positive example for the students. In addition to the staff, the way that the classrooms were set up also contributed to the warmth that Lacey Spring exudes. Many of the teachers had string lights, lamps, posters, and seating deviant from standard classrooms in order to create a



cozy and fun setting for the students to learn in. At times I wished that I had attended Lacey Spring when I was in elementary school!

My specific position as an intern for Ms. Greene was wonderful as well. Prior to Field Placement, I did not have much experience being around kids, especially not large groups of kids. Ms. Greene was extremely patient, supportive, and positive as I navigated through the internship and slowly learned how to interact with students of differing grade levels. Additionally, she was clear in her communication, as each day there would be a list on the chalkboard of things to get done. Ms. Greene also ensured that I, and the other interns, received the full school-counseling experience by allowing us to walk with her whenever she left the classroom and including us in on conversations that she was having with other teachers. Thus, I learned more about the relationship that the counselor has with people of differing roles in the school. Lastly, I'd like to mention that Ms. Greene went above and beyond in her role as a supervisor by giving me and the other interns tips on applying to graduate school. She pulled out a number of books and prior school work that she had saved from her school counseling program at Radford University for us to read, thus, we were given a better idea of what the course work in such a program is like.

Because Ms. Greene was so attentive and deeply cared about the experience that I was having, much of my time was positive and there were very few disadvantages. If I was having a bad day, I could definitely count on Lacey Spring to make it better. The only thing that I would change is the number of interns that Ms. Greene had. There were four of us, so any new assignments that we were given were finished quickly, and thus at times there was quite a bit of down time. I would attempt to fill this time by researching more activities or working on an activity of my own for a particular buddy of mine, however, if there were fewer interns I believe that I would've been able to be more productive.

From this internship at Lacey Spring, I learned more about the differing cognitive levels of students in various grades, as well as how the school counselor has such a profound and direct impact on students' lives. I also learned how to document and present my ideas in a creative way through posters and worksheets. The biggest thing that I learned, though, is how to be adaptable. Circumstances at the school often changed in the blink of an eye, whether it was the students getting into an altercation, upset parents wanting to talk, or switching between conversations with many students at once. At the beginning of the internship I found this a little bit overwhelming, however, it now comes easily to me. Although I don't believe that school counseling is for me, adaptability, creativity, and an understanding of different types of learners can, in my opinion, be applied to any field that one may go into. Thus, I feel much more confident in my abilities and skills as a whole going forward. I truly could not have asked for a better supervisor or internship experience, and am forever grateful for the opportunity to have interned at Lacey Spring Elementary. If you're unsure about what site you'd like to intern at, I can definitely assure you that you'd be in amazing hands at Lacey Spring Elementary School!

Spring 2019 – Megan Jones



My experience at Lacey Spring Elementary School was all that I had hoped it would be. I learned a lot from my supervisor Katie Greene as well as all of the other staff at the school. I was able to interact with children ranging from ages 5 to 11 and learn all the ins and outs of a school. Working with Katie, the school counselor, taught me how to work with children with a range of emotional and behavioral needs. I was able to observe her own interventions with students and then apply what I had learned with my own buddies that I was assigned. I also learned how important communication is when it comes to staff, students, and especially parents.

Lacey Spring Elementary School believes that every child is entitled to a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting. The school also strives to have a high-quality instructional program that is designed to build the self-confidence and self-esteem of students. In broad terms, the school believes that education is a joint effort between parents, the staff at Lacey Spring, and the community. The school is a part of the Rockingham County Public Schools and serves students in grades PreK to fifth grade. As you can imagine, a lot of pivotal development occurs within this range of ages, making the services provided by this school even more important. Aside from the standard classroom teachers, the school currently employs a speech pathologist, Therapeutic Day Treatment Counselor, School Counselor, several English language learner specialists, reading specialists, and special education specialists with a focus on Autism. This range of experts supports the school's priority to meet the diverse educational needs of their students.

At my site I was assigned 3 buddies to work closely with throughout the semester to build their social and emotional skills through the use of books, play therapy, and various activities I created. I was able to eat lunch with them each day I was there as well as pull them from class for a short amount of time if the teacher permitted. Over the course of the semester I became extremely close to these students and was able to see them develop these skills we had worked on. I also got to observe and assist Katie's lessons to the classes that came to her room every week. Part of the role of a school counselor is to teach character development. This is done through the use of the six pillars of character that are taught throughout the school year. These pillars range from teaching skills on how to be caring to yourself and others, to respect, and finally citizenship to wrap up the year. I even had the opportunity to create my own lesson plan that corresponded to the current pillar and teach it to a class. When I wasn't directly interacting with the students, I was creating bulletin boards, researching and creating new material for Katie to use, and recording and filing notes on my experiences with my buddies. Katie was also really flexible, which made it easy to interact and learn about all of the other staff's responsibilities that I was interested in learning more about.

Over all I am very happy with my site. The small environment made it seem even more welcoming. The atmosphere at Lacey Spring is upbeat and positive, especially when the principal Ms. May is around. The staff get along well and their optimistic relationships trickle down to the students who are generally happy and enjoy going to school each day. The day of a school counselor is often busy and hectic, but Katie always took the time to explain to me what was going on and answered any questions I had. At first, the lack of structure was hard for me to adjust to but eventually I became comfortable enough to take initiative and do what I thought was appropriate.

I really enjoyed my placement mostly because of the small size of the school. Even though LSES has students in PreK to fifth grade there are only two classrooms for each grade, making the total enrollment just over 200 students. I felt that this small size made it easy to adjust and learn the majority of the students and staff relatively quickly. The small school size made the experience seem



less overwhelming at first and I quickly learned how connected the staff and students were. The most challenging part about my experience was being exposed to the trauma and difficulties some of the students have gone through at home. A big part of a school counselors' role is to address problems students are experiencing at home and as a result of effecting their education. As a result of this I was able to observe Katie's individual interventions with students about any problems they may be having and the steps that are taken to address the issues. Many times, this involved calling CPS and filing a report about the student and their concern. As hard as it was to be exposed to this my eyes were opened to all aspects of the job of a school counselor and I am glad I have learned some coping mechanisms and resources to help young children that are going through this.

I learned so much over the span of my field placement experience. I went into this wanting to pursue a career as a school psychologist and this experience confirmed my decision to do so. Being in the school setting for two full days a week really opened my eyes to what it is like to work in a school. I am glad that I had this exposure during my undergraduate studies so that I am able to enter a school psychology graduate program knowing what working in a school and with young children entails. The interprofessional experience of learning the different professions in a school from teachers, speech pathologists, special education teachers, enrichment specialists, and administration makes me feel confident in my knowledge concerning what it takes to run a successful school.

Spring 2019 – Jessica Fewer

This semester I was lucky enough to work alongside of Ms. Greene at Lacey Spring Elementary School. This school works to provide students with the resources and skills to lead independent and successful lives. They also believe that the key to a successful education is the cooperation of the school, parents and the community. It is a joint effort from all parties to make sure a child reaches their full potential. The services provided in this school are typical of those of traditional elementary schools. Classes consist of about 20 students, they attend specials such as physical education, art, music, library and guidance. In addition to lessons that are offered they also have rooms that are specialized for students with intellectual and learning disabilities. Having these resources for students gives them the individualized care they need to successfully perform academically and behaviorally. However, I got to spend the most of my time with Ms. Greene, the school counselor. I participated, helped and observed the services that she offers to students.

One thing that I thought went really well was her Lacey Leaders group. These are a select group of 5th grade students that are kind, motivated and overall have positive attitudes. This group helps younger students and staff with daily operations during breakfast, lunch and bus departure. They also act as role models to the entire school. In addition, Ms. Greene promotes leadership skills through this group in hope that these students will continue their role of being a leader in middle school. Another small group program that Ms. Greene ran was called The Boys Club. These 6 boys were chosen by their first grade teachers who think they would benefit from education on decision making, problem solving, emotional regulation and socialization. After sitting in on a few sessions I truly saw the impact this group had on the students. They were able to describe their emotions to a friend that was bothering them and understand the perspective of



others. In addition to group services, Ms. Greene also meets with students, parents and staff members daily to make sure the children are reaching their full potential.

Throughout the week Ms. Greene also teaches to all grade levels. Her lessons include educating on trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness, stress management, citizenship and many more. She has the students participate in group work, individual work and even sharing their thoughts and feelings as a whole class. These lessons benefit the student immensely because these are not topics typically covered in an academic classroom.

My experiences at Lacey Spring were very valuable and have taught me a lot. In the beginning of the semester I was given small cohort of students that I got to meet with individually a few times a week. During our time together we discussed any obstacles at school or at home and tried to come up with action plans to solve the problem the best we can. For example, one area we focused on was emotional regulation and different steps to take when we are feeling a certain way. I have seen great changes in these students and hope that I gave them the support they needed to succeed in the future. I then learned how to document my conversations with them, by writing down facts rather than emotions. I also was able to help out in classrooms, primarily the Pre-K room. I mostly helped them get up from nap and get ready to leave for the day. Even though these tasks seem minute it helped the teachers a lot and make departure easier for everyone.

Additionally, I was given the opportunity to teach multiple lessons to the 2nd and 3rd grade classes. With Ms. Greene's help and the resources available in her classroom I was able to plan lessons that were educational and intriguing to students. Furthermore, I helped Ms. Greene with lesson planning herself by finding fun activities or books for students. I also created posters on empathy, emotional regulation, cyber safety and a bulletin board on citizenship.

By far the biggest advantage of this site was the fact that I got to experience the ups and downs of school counseling. Having such a huge impact on students is beyond rewarding but sometimes due to uncontrollable circumstances children can be removed from the school system. Losing that relationship you made with a student is harder than I thought but at the end of the day you have to realize the impact you made on their lives is more beneficial than you thought. Even though it was sad I am happy that I got to experience these situations because it will only make me a better and more prepared counselor in the future. Another advantage was the staff at Lacey Spring. Everyone was very welcoming and willing to help me at any time. More specifically the principal was one the sweetest and most genuine people I've met. Even though she had so many other jobs throughout the day she always made an effort to say hi to me and ask how I was.

As far as disadvantages go the only critique I would say is for the school to understand the primary role of school counselor. What I have noticed is that teaching takes away from the time that Ms. Greene can spend with students who need the extra one-on-one care. This is a problem I have seen at multiple schools as well. Counselors take on a lot tasks throughout the day and teaching could prevent them from taking on jobs where they are required to attend, for example parent conferences. However, this past week Ms. Greene was happy to tell me that she will be the first school counselor in Rockingham county that will not be teaching next year. This is a great step in the right direction and I am happy Lacey Spring recognized it.



Overall, my time at Lacey Spring was amazing. I learned more about school counseling than I thought I would. Ms. Greene was the best supervisor I could ask for. Her patience and appreciation for her field placement students made me feel comfortable to learn. Getting to document my conversations with students, sitting in on CPS calls and interacting with numerous students and staff made me feel extremely prepared for my future graduate study in school counseling.

Fall 2018 – Kelsey Sullivan

The philosophy statement of Lacey Spring Elementary School (LSES) is quite long, but the statements and words used in it all form this overarching concept that they want to better educate the students in a supportive and encouraging way that not only teaches them standard material but also teaches about interpersonal skills through a collaborative effort from teachers, students, and parents. I really like the philosophy at this school because while school is meant for teaching the typical courses, like science, math, language arts, specials (music, art, physical education), etc., teaching interpersonal skills through the school counselor is so important, and it will carry on throughout their life. The school counselor, Katie Greene, teaches classes to each grade once a week. She follows the Character Counts program which goes through six-week blocks of different character words like responsibility, respect, caring, trustworthiness, citizenship, and fairness. Within each six-week block she teaches ways to be each, for example: hygiene (caring), bullying (respect), feelings (responsibility), and many more. On top of teaching classes, Katie Greene counsels students when a problem arises; I have seen this been done in multiple ways. Two students were brought in at the same time when there was a bullying issue, one student was brought in when there was a note passing situation, and she visited a student's classroom to talk about behaviors that should not be exhibited at school. While she does teach and counsel, she also creates a trusting and friendly relationship with the students so that they feel as they can talk to her about anything.

Working with Katie Greene has been an amazing opportunity, and I am so grateful for it. At the start of the semester I was given five students who I mentored individually; my students were from preschool to fifth grade. The variety of ages I was given really allowed me to connect with each student through different activities. For example, with preschool and kindergarten building rapport was done through play, but with second, third, and fifth, communication and personal activities is what helped build a relationship there. On top of mentoring I was able to teach classes to two different grades. This was a bit intimidating for me because public speaking and presenting is really nerve wracking for me. Thankfully, before I taught, I was able to observe Katie Greene teach classes for a month or so which allowed me to learn how to effectively teach a class, get to know the students, and calm the students down if they got too loud. I created lesson plans and activities for these students, and the feedback I was given was very positive. This allowed me to gain a sort of confidence and calmness so when my second lesson came around, I was more comfortable. In addition to mentoring, teaching, and observing Katie, I also interacted with the teachers and their classes. I especially spent a lot of time with preschool and



kindergarten. I would visit the two grades and talk with the teachers if they needed any help, and sometimes I would go in and interact with the students by playing or scaffolding them with their work if needed. Of course, throughout this experience, I had to complete some clerical work like creating posters and bulletin boards, making copies of notes, and researching. Even though this clerical work was not directly involving students, I really enjoyed creating and researching topics that will help them indirectly.

Carrying out my field placement at Lacey Spring Elementary School was the first time I have ever been fully emerged in the school counseling realm, and I got to experience it firsthand. Before this semester I had known I wanted to move forward with school counseling as my career, but I never really knew what it would fully entail. LSES really allowed me to learn what it means to be a school counselor. Every day was different; there was never really a “typical day.” This was something that Katie Greene had told me on my first day, and boy was she right. Each day was full of new adventures in developing a sense to be a school counselor, whether it be conflicts between students, individual student problems, or family issues. In observing Katie Greene handle these situations, I learned why taking notes is important and what one should include in them, how and when to get Child Protective Services (CPS) involved, and when to contact the parents. I learned so much that I would not have been taught in a lecture class. Working in this school really allowed me to gain that firsthand experience and give me a sense for what my future career entails.

While working with the school counselor was great, it also had one drawback that is personally tough for me. The students that come to Katie Greene often disclose personal information about their home life which can be disheartening at times. One thing that I struggled with is to not take it home with me. This was another thing that Katie Greene said to expect. Not all the kids had/have a great upbringing so they have endured a lot. It’s hard to listen and hear about what these kids go through and not think about it later in the day. However, I have managed to try and separate it for the most part, but it makes me realize how much these children need a school counselor. They need someone to talk to.

I know this may seem a little vague, but what I really learned in my time here is what it means to be a school counselor and what the job entails. I learned that being a school counselor does not just mean counseling students – though that is a huge part of the job. It means creating relationships with the whole faculty and having good communication with parents in order to service children to the best of your ability. I learned that there has to be time during the week where you have to get the clerical work done, and even though you want to talk to students, work has to get done too which will benefit the children. I learned how and when to get CPS involved. While I learned so much about school counseling, I learned a lot about myself. Before I started at LSES, I was nervous to work with young children, but now I look back and I wonder why I was so nervous. These kids were great. I also improved a lot of interpersonal skills. I had to communicate with kids between the ages of four and eleven and the faculty here as well. I improved my presenting and teaching skills through the lessons I taught. The main thing that I learned about myself is that I really want to be a school counselor. Before beginning this field placement, I knew I wanted to go into school counseling; so, field placement was the perfect opportunity to get an inside look. Now, post-placement, I have this passion for school



counseling, and I have really solidified my future career choice. Completing my field placement at Lacey Spring Elementary School was truly the best opportunity that I could have asked for.

Fall 2018 – Megan Lau

The mission of Lacey Spring Elementary School is to provide each student with a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting. They work to build the self-confidence and self-esteem of students as well as give students opportunities to develop their skills in communication and leadership. This school aims at creating lifelong learners, creative thinkers, and problem solvers. Lacey Spring Elementary School has about 250 students in Pre-K through fifth grade. This small school size creates the opportunity for the students to develop close relationships with the faculty and staff. It is clear that everyone who works at Lacey Spring Elementary School cares for the students and goes above and beyond to support them academically, emotionally, socially, and developmentally. The students partake in a number of classes such as art, music, physical education, library, computer lab/technology and guidance.

I worked with the school counselor, Katie Greene, over the past semester. During my time at Lacey Spring Elementary School I had the opportunity to experience and observe the different roles that a school counselor fulfills. I was able to experience real-life scenarios that occur in the school setting and learn how to deal with different situations. I also learned the day to day responsibilities of a school counselor. Katie teaches each grade level once a week for thirty- to forty-five minutes. In addition, she counsels students individually and sometimes in groups depending on the situation. Her job also involves talking with parents and working with the faculty to ensure each child is getting the support they need. Unfortunately, her job also involves calling Child Protective Services(CPS) which I had the opportunity to observe. Katie taught me about the procedure and necessary steps involved with calling CPS.

I had multiple opportunities and responsibilities at Lacey Spring Elementary School. First, I was able to observe the guidance classes that Katie taught weekly. The counseling lessons are based off of the six pillars of the character counts program - trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. I helped to create activities and research lessons based on the character building program. Occasionally, I would assist in reading stories about character building to the students. Secondly, I created multiple bulletin boards and posters to reinforce the different pillars of the character counts program. I also assisted with clerical work such as making copies, laminating, and cutting different things out. Lastly, I mentored five children in various grades between Kindergarten and fifth grade. I met weekly with each child for about thirty minutes to discuss any challenges or problems they were facing and then brain storm coping strategies. Sometimes we would have time to play a game or draw pictures. Overall, I was able to interact with and support multiple students on a daily basis.

I really enjoyed working at Lacey Spring Elementary School. Katie is an amazing supervisor and I always felt comfortable asking her questions. She would always explain to me the different roles that other professionals she works with fulfills. I learned so much through observing Katie interact with the students, parents, and the faculty. She genuinely loves and cares



about each student. The students are lucky to have her looking out for their best interests. Every day at Lacey Spring was fast-paced which I really enjoyed. There was always a situation to deal with, students that needed support or classes to teach. Katie would always fill me in on important information regarding specific children or situations. This gave me a good understanding of the different situations that occur within elementary schools. She always provided me with clear expectations in tasks or responsibilities but would give me freedom within that to add my own creativity or ideas. This was a great environment to learn how to work independently in a professional setting but also to learn how to work collaboratively. Katie is an amazing school counselor.

I learned invaluable information and skills through this field placement experience. I came into this experience wanting to learn more about the daily responsibilities of a school counselor because I might work with them one day. I admire school counselors because of the positive impact they have on the school environment. I learned the skills necessary to flourish in a school environment and how to work with teachers, parents, and students. This experience strengthened my passion for working with children and has confirmed for me that I love working in the school setting. The children at Lacey Spring Elementary School are sweet, kind, and caring; they deserve the world. I feel like I was able to make strong connections with the students here and I learned a lot from working with them.

I want to become a school psychologist and working with a school counselor has given me an interesting perspective. Often times school psychologists are not stationed at one specific school rather they work at multiple schools. I enjoyed having the opportunity to work at one school because I was able to see all the challenges and multiple contexts that impact children with a low socioeconomic status. School psychologists work with parents, students and faculty to help children with learning, behavior and mental health problems. I am grateful to have seen the multiple relationships between teachers, parents, faculty, staff and students. I have improved my interpersonal skills from interacting with teachers, staff, and the students. I know that I will use the skills I learned at Lacey Spring in my future career as a school psychologist. Lacey Spring Elementary School is a great site for any student who loves working with children and is interested in learning more about working in a school setting. Overall, I could not have asked for a better site experience.

Spring 2018 – Margaret Wallace

Lacey Spring Elementary School strives to provide children with a supportive environment to allow students to access their full academic potential. The faculty and staff promote learning throughout the school and support child growth developmentally, socially and academically. Furthermore, teachers and staff work to promote students' self confidence and the opportunity to develop their unique skills and talents. Additionally, they expose the children to technological tools to advance their learning and prepare them for the technological future that lies ahead of them. Lastly, and what I believe to be their greatest philosophy, they work to emphasize that learning is lifelong and instill the skills of 'learning how to learn' in their



students. It is extremely clear to see the passion held by each staff member for these students and their well-being.

During my time at Lacey Spring I had the privilege of working with the school counselor, Ms. Katie Greene. I was allocated the responsibility of mentoring 5 children in all different grade levels. Every day that I was at my site I met with one of my students for typically a 30 minute period. During these sessions we would usually play a game or draw pictures. This allowed students to have a time where they could express themselves and discuss with me any difficulties they may be having at the time. We often discussed conflicts with peers and ways to resolve them, struggles at home and coping strategies. Along with mentoring, I was able to assist Ms. Greene in teaching the 6 pillars of character education: respect, caring, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, and citizenship, to all of her classes. Towards the end of the semester I was able to create a lesson plan and teach my own class; this was an amazing learning experience for me! A lot of our day was filled with checking in on classrooms and assisting teachers with whatever they needed, and just being an extra set of hands in the classroom. Additionally myself and other practicum students were also asked to complete various tasks like creating lesson plans, researching ideas, creating bulletin boards and printing off various items like posters or worksheets. Often, these posters included things like bullying, mindfulness education, emotional management strategies etc. I learned so much not only from Ms. Greene but also from observing the other teachers as well. I spent a lot of time in the pre-k and kindergarten classes, and learned so much from the ways they interacted with their children and incorporated play and movement into their curriculum. Overall, as practicum students, we had quite a bit of flexibility in the areas we wanted to focus on. Whether it was observing certain grade level classrooms, working with special-ed, or researching topics of interest to implement in the school, Katie really supported us and worked really hard for us to be able to get all that we could out of our experience there.

Working at Lacey Spring was my first exposure in working in an academic setting. I learned a lot about the day to day duties of a school counselor and what it actually looks like in real life. The average day is much more fluid than I imagined; there really isn't an "average day". I never knew what I may encounter when walking through those doors, whether it was entertaining a group of kids when a teacher had to step out, or assisting an individual child in need. Furthermore, with permission granted from the child, I was able to observe Ms. Greene's interactions with students during difficulties like peer-to-peer conflicts, anger management, coping with trauma and home life troubles. It was so helpful to see Ms. Greene's responses to sensitive cases like these. I learned a lot from observing her counseling techniques and strategies.

The biggest challenge I encountered at the site was the emotional challenges that came with it. In the beginning I was a bit surprised and overwhelmed by the amount of trauma some of these children had gone through. However, as hard as this may be it was such a huge learning experience for me. I was able to better understand the various backgrounds children come from and how that can affect their behavior. Overall, I have such positive impressions on the site as a whole. The faculty and staff are great, my supervisor was fantastic, and I really enjoy the way things are run. I think the only limitation the site may have is the fact that the student population



is not particularly diverse. This could be a factor for some practicum students to consider because it is so helpful to learn about and interact with other cultures.

Overall, I feel that the site not only gave me a great vision for what it would look like to be a school counselor, but it also opened up my eyes to many other related careers. Ms. Greene always took the time to explain roles and responsibilities of the people she worked with, for example, Therapeutic Day Treatment Specialists, School Psychologists, Behavioral Specialists, Social Workers and many others. It was so helpful to hear about what these positions do in an academic environment and how they interact with a school counselor.

I chose this site as a way to explore the field of school counseling to determine if that was the path for me, and though I am not sure it is for me, I gained so much knowledge and skills that I know will be useful for me in a related field. In terms of my career I am unsure if a school counselor is the right choice for me, however, regardless of the career path I choose, I know I will use the skills I gained from this experience. More than likely I will be working with children for a large chunk of my career, and I believe this experience has prepared me for that.

Spring 2018 – Rachel Biggs

Lacey Spring Elementary focuses on the idea that education does not just involve the student, but the parents, staff, and the Rockingham County community. They believe that every child should be looked at as an individual, and treated as such. The school promises to promote a high quality program that provides students with the opportunities and instruction to help them be successful in the future. The school works with students' ages ranging from Pre-K through fifth. In comparison with various elementary schools around the county, Lacey Spring holds a very small population of students which helps to bring about a more personal environment for both the staff and students.

Throughout my experience at Lacey Spring Elementary, I was able to see just how important a part a school counselor plays in the lives of students. I was paired up with five students who all are currently struggling with various personal or academic struggles. These students consisted of one in Pre-K, one first grader, two second graders, and one fifth grader. I was able to spend one on one time with each of the students at least once a week, helping them in the various areas of life that they may be struggling with. In addition, I was able to assist my mentor in her classes every week, as well as prepare and conduct my own lesson. The school counseling curriculum focuses on character education, traits such as Respect, Citizenship, Trustworthiness, etc. Finally, I was able to perform various activities such as creating bulletin boards and working on activities that all focused on the specific area of character education that my mentor was teaching at the time.

When describing my overall experience at Lacey Spring Elementary, I have nothing but positive things to say. My mentor, Katie Greene, the current school counselor at the school, provided me with such an incredible experience. She made sure that I always felt comfortable before introducing me to a new project, and was always ready to answer any questions that I had about not only the school counseling profession, but my future academic plans as well. Just as I



do, the students at Lacey look at Katie with such admiration and comfort, for they know that she is always there when they need her. I believe the best part of my experience was getting to know not only the students and Katie, but the staff as well. The whole school welcomed me with open arms, and I could not have asked for a better field placement site.

The main lesson that I feel I have learned from my experience while at Lacey Spring is just how big of a part educators play in children's lives. These students spend nearly all of their time at school, interacting with the staff on an individual basis. The impact that I have seen throughout my time at Lacey Spring has provided me with a great deal of knowledge that I hope to use as an educator someday as well. My observations and experiences have greatly influenced both the career and personal goals that I hope to achieve in the future.

Overall, my field placement experience could not have been better. I am confident in that this school would provide a great amount of knowledge and opportunity for any student who is interested in getting involved within the education system. I believe that Lacey Spring in particular was able to give me an insight into just how living in a lower socioeconomic level community is able to effect children. I was in awe of how resilient the children at Lacey Spring remained despite the many stressors that they had going on at home. I am hopeful that through their interactions with the wonderful Lacey Spring educators, they will overcome whatever struggles that they are dealing with.

Fall 2017 – Courtney Hevener

Lacey Spring Elementary School's mission is to ultimately provide students with a nurturing and safe environment in which they are able to flourish academically and developmentally. Lacey provides an educational setting for Pre-K through fifth grade with special education classes for both lower and upper level students. They are a smaller elementary school which allows for an environment where everyone really knows one another. They have specials as well which includes art, music, gym, the library, and the computer lab.

During my time at Lacey I have had experience with several real-life scenarios that a school counselor would be presented with. First, I have observed various lessons on character education and created and implemented my own lesson as well. Secondly, I have created several posters and bulletin boards to showcase what is being taught in the character education lessons. Third, I have had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with five students weekly to check in with how they are doing in school and at home and attempt to try and work with them through things they may be struggling with in either setting. Ultimately, I have been able to really be able to see what it is like to be a school counselor by seeing the things that happen on a daily basis.

I could not have asked for a better supervisor; Katie the school counselor, has constantly answered any and all questions that I have had about the site and the profession but also questions about graduate school. My time spent at Lacey was very fast-paced and I always had something to do. It was the type of environment that I did well in because there was not much time just sitting around. I enjoyed always having a task or having a situation we had to deal with. I honestly can't think of something I did not enjoy about this site. I feel like I was given a real



look into being a school counselor and Katie provided me with any and all information that was needed for me to truly succeed during my time there. I also was able to really become close with the students at Lacey. They are a great group of kids that really make you feel welcome during the time spent there. I enjoyed the freedom of the site the most. Katie provided structure in terms of expectations and tasks that she wanted to be accomplished; however, she always allowed the freedom for me to create and implement my own creativity and ideas into anything that I was doing. Katie truly cares about each intern at this site and does everything she can to ensure that we get the most out of being at Lacey.

I think the biggest thing I have learned during my time at Lacey has been how to successfully manage fast-paced days. What I mean by this is that you never know what you might get when you walk through those doors. You may be faced with kids that are in a fight and you are the one to mediate the situation, a child that is having outbursts and the teacher needs you to talk him down, or even a child comes to school covered in marks and bites and you have to take him to the nurse to get checked out. I am extremely thankful that Katie allowed me to see and experience all the different situations that may happen in a typical school day. I think this allowed for me to have a clearer idea of what a school counselor may be expected to do depending on the school that they are in. While all of these situations may pop up throughout the day it is important to make sure that you still have lessons planned and to make sure you check in with all the classes in the school. Overall, I have learned how important it is to be flexible and available to the needs of the students and the teachers while also making sure that you are able to take care of your own responsibilities as well.

Ultimately, this experience strengthened my passion for working with kids, but it especially showed me that this is the career that I want to pursue for the rest of my life. I think it really allowed for me to see the practical and realistic responsibilities and expectations of a school counselor. In addition to strengthening my overall career goals, this experience at Lacey showed me that I really have a passion for working with populations in lower socioeconomic levels. I firmly believe that I want to spend my career as a school counselor working with those kids that typically get looked over. I know this tends to come with additional challenges; however, I want to be able to give a voice to those kids that are typically overlooked. My time at Lacey Spring showed me the importance of having a school counselor but also the importance of taking the time to really get to know the kids and their specific needs whether it be things like clean clothes, extra snacks, or even just giving them extra hugs because they need it.

Spring 2017 – Stephanie Romero Mosqueda

Lacey Spring is a school that focuses on child success through a well-planned instructional program. There is an opportunity for children to succeed in academics, leadership, and relationship skills. In addition, part of Lacey Spring's mission states that the school plans "To provide a quality education that promotes respect for self, others, and the school". The concept of respect and other character traits are taught through the school counselor Katie Greene. She teaches guidance lessons on the six traits of character (respect, trustworthiness, caring, citizenship, responsibility, fairness) to grades K-5. Apart from teaching, Katie offers individual



counseling which can include play, activities, or drawing. Other forms of counseling can include small groups. There are also different small groups available to students which can include groups on self-image, broken families, or anger management.

In my time at Lacey Spring, I was paired up with 5 different students ranging from grades 1-5. I would meet with each student every day that I was at Lacey Spring. With my mentees, I would usually play with the sand box, play games, and talk about what was on their mind. In addition, I would create worksheets or activities to help them through emotional or other situations. For example, I created a paper game that included strategies for anger management for one of my students. For another student, role play was a great way for her to express herself and we would play with puppets at times. Apart from one on one time with my mentees, Katie would find projects for me and the other field placement students to work on. Projects included creating posters for her classroom and lesson plans. Posters that we created included concepts learned in guidance class. For example, one poster focused on the differences between the words, rude, mean, and bullying. Another poster gave students coping strategies for anger management. These posters allowed me to get creative and be able to tailor information to the elementary school level.

My supervisor Katie Greene is a young school counselor starting out her career; this was exceptionally advantageous for me and the other field placement students. She was very up to date with recent changes and gave us excellent tips on school counseling. She was always willing to answer any questions and open to my suggestions. There were many opportunities that we took advantage of. Unfortunately, due to time, I was not able to start a small group. Although we were not able to start small groups, there was a lot of talk about it and it could have been done.

This placement requires dedication and a willingness to be challenged. I enjoyed my time at Lacey Spring because I always stayed busy and challenged throughout the semester. I chose this placement because I have plans to be a school counselor. This placement helped me confirm school counseling as my desired career. I also learned many things about school counseling that I never realized (like teaching) were a part of the profession. I learned that it is definitely a setting that I would like to be in for a while. I am very fortunate to have spent a semester at Lacey Spring and I recommend it to anyone who is even considering school counseling or school psychology.

Spring 2017 – Becca Smoot

This semester, I had the privilege of working in the school counseling department at Lacey Spring Elementary School under the supervision of school counselor, Ms. Katie Greene. Lacey Spring's mission and philosophy states "every child is entitled to a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting." The faculty, staff and volunteers at Lacey not only strive to create successful students but also well rounded individuals. In addition to academics, social skills,



communication and self-confidence are at the forefront of values and skills to be instilled within the children. Lacey Spring provides public education for children grades Pre-K through fifth. In addition to general classroom education, Lacey provides counseling, speech development, special education, and reading support as well as supporting classes such as gym, art and music.

While at Lacey Spring this semester, I was given a multitude of different opportunities and experiences. I was able to shadow and learn from Ms. Greene in a variety of school counseling settings and situations. Throughout the entirety of the semester, I acted as a mentor for five students, ranging in grades Pre-K through fifth. I would spend twenty to thirty minutes with each student twice a week. During my sessions with each child, I would conduct activities focused on self-esteem, communication, friendship and proper behaviors. I would give the children the opportunity to share any concerns or thoughts with me and then complete an activity with them to help aid any issue they may be experiencing. In addition to acting as a mentor, I was able to assist Ms. Greene in leading counseling lessons for each grade level. The counseling lessons were centered around the six pillars of the character counts program – trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Alongside Ms. Greene, I was able to create and facilitate activities and readings for the children centered around character building. While I was not working individually with students or aiding in classroom instruction, I would create supplemental posters and activities, develop thorough note taking and proper filing skills and assist Ms. Greene with any additional tasks.

From the first time, I set foot in Lacey Spring, I felt the warm and welcoming environment. Every teacher, staff member or child you see is willing to greet you and share a smile. This atmosphere made me feel wanted and useful at this site. I was able to form rapport and relationships not only with my supervisor but also many teachers and students. The warm atmosphere of the school was by far one of my favorite aspects of my experience. Another aspect that I thoroughly enjoyed about Lacey was the size of the school. Lacey is a relatively small school, only having two classrooms per grade level. As such, I was able to meet and interact with most of the teachers and many students. I feel this experience was beneficial as I was able to learn from a multitude of individuals about aspects of being in a school. My experience at Lacey was also strengthened through the relationship I developed with Ms. Greene and the other field placement students at my site. It was both beneficial and enjoyable to be able to discuss my experiences with these individuals. I was always able to go to Ms. Greene for suggestions on how to approach unique situations. Similarly, it was nice to get feedback from the other field placement students on how they dealt with similar scenarios. Without the strong support system created by Ms. Greene and the other field placement students at my site, I likely would not have had the same experience I did. When reflecting on my experiencing as a whole, I can honestly say I only recall positive memories and learning experiences.

Two of the biggest skills I learned and developed while at Lacey were patience and the ability to think on my toes. When working with children, specifically in a school setting, you never know what to expect. You may have some background information on the child yet you do not know the details of their home life or what they are dealing with outside of the school setting. Many of the children I worked one-on-one with did not have the best home lives. They would often come to school after experiencing rough and often saddening experiences at home the



night before. Therefore, I had to learn to be ready for anything. As a trusted adult for these children, I needed to be prepared to hear them out and offer guidance and support. These scenarios required a great deal of patience. Children, specifically younger children, may not know how to express exactly what happened or how they are feeling. Thus, it may take a while to piece together the story they are sharing. The skills of patience and quick thinking have influenced my career goals in a great way. Next year I will be working in an elementary school as a teacher. Within my role as a school counseling intern, I have worked on skills that will directly benefit be in the classroom. Having developed my patience and quick thinking skills, I now feel more comfortable moving forward in my new role of teaching.

My experience at Lacey Spring was fantastic and I would not change a thing if given the opportunity. It gave me great insight into the career of school counseling as well as tools on how to prosperously function in a school setting. While my short-term goals are teaching, this placement has helped solidify my long-term goals of becoming an elementary school counselor. While as time progresses these goals may change, I am confident that I have gained skills in this placement that will help prepare me for any youth centered, helping position I may pursue in the future.

Spring 2017 – Emily Smith

The mission of Lacey Spring Elementary School is similar to many elementary schools in that the staff wants to create a warm and safe learning environment for the students. Lacey Spring Elementary School is somewhat of a small school with about 260 students and over 55 staff members to service the students. I found it interesting that there are only two to three 2nd-5th grade classrooms; the small number of students could be seen as an advantage for the school counselor. The smaller population makes the role of a counselor easier to be able to get to know and spend time with more of the students. I was able to get to know, mentor, and build a relationship with 5 students at Lacey Spring who were in 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th grade. There was one boy and four girls all with different age ranges that I got to learn from and experience the best ways in which to interact with them. Each student had a different situation going on their life and each student had different ways that worked best as a counseling session. However, all of the students responded well when we played games and read stories together. Most of my time with the students was spent during their lunch time. I was also able to help Ms. Greene with several projects and many posters for her classroom. If I wasn't spending time the kids or working on projects, I was observing or helping teach the class and I even got to read to a couple classes. My impressions of the site are great; the school sticks to their values and missions and creates a warm and pleasant environment for the kids and the staff members are always willing to help. The only disadvantage I can think of at Lacey Spring is the student population as a whole is not very diverse both culturally and economically. This lack of diversity can also be seen as a limitation because there is so much to learn from other people and their cultures. I think it would be interesting if Lacey Spring held a culture day similar to the structure of their agriculture day.



I have learned so much at Lacey Spring and hope to continue work within an elementary school. I think the biggest takeaway from my time at Lacey Spring is learning how to interact with children on a deeper level. When I practiced the one on one counseling techniques with the kids I was able to see a little bit more into the lives of children and how most kids have very adult-like problems that they are faced with. Knowing the problems the children face it has become such a learning experience to interact with the kids, solve issues, and build a trusting relationship. I have discovered through my experience at Lacey Spring that I love working with kids in their school environment, however, I think I would like to focus more on the academic level rather than emotional level of students. I still appreciate and value the emotions of students and have taken away such a valuable experience at Lacey Spring.

Spring 2017 - Caroline Mathews

At my time at Lacey Spring Elementary School, I was privileged to work beneath the school counselor, Katie Greene. I learned so much through her teaching as well as through LSES' mission that "every child is entitled to a well-planned, well-organized, and well-implemented instructional program in a warm and supportive classroom setting" no matter the classroom and no matter the material they learn. The services a school counselor offers at LSES is one on one counseling as well as teaching each class about the "Character Pillars." The Character Pillars are values that the county finds important and what they believe every child should know. They are trustworthiness, fairness, caring, respect, responsibility, and citizenship. The counselor teaches a lesson on each value throughout the school year. Through my practicum, I was able to have a good amount of responsibility. My main responsibilities were counseling five students within the school as well as teaching a lesson on "Character Pillars". Not only that, but I decorated the room with time appropriate posters, came up with ideas on what to teach, and created lesson plans of my own for each of my students. By counseling students one on one, I was able to see what these students were like, what problems they had and needed to work on, what they wanted to learn, and more. Together, each student and I completed steps to improve their problems, whether it be learning ways to calm down, how to follow directions, or how to be a good role model. I got to know each and every student in depth. I tried to be a person the students could come to for anything; I was a friend for these kids who may not have someone to turn to. I was also a resource they could use to solve problems or gain advice from. Being able to meet with these students one on one, generally unsupervised, made me feel that I was a trusted individual within the school. I felt as though my work that I was doing was important and that I was trusted enough to handle that great responsibility. I loved feeling responsible enough that I could help these children.

Overall, I thought that this was an amazing experience and I am so glad that I was able to work here for the semester. I was able to see what it was like living day to day as a counselor. I was able to see how the school counselor carries so much responsibility within the school and within their community. I learned so much through the opportunities they gave me, like teaching a class and counseling one on one. Those were the greatest advantages I experienced at LSES. If



I had not done my field placement here, I am not sure how much I would have learned about truly being a counselor. I didn't feel that there were any disadvantages, honestly. My supervisor taught me so much about how to be a counselor and all that the job entails. I feel as though, I am prepared now to take on a role of a counselor, or at least attend graduate school for school counseling. There were no limitations while I was there. I was given essentially free reign to teach what I'd like and work with the kids on what they needed. It's been a wonderful experience at LSES and I will surely miss the friends I've made there and the students I have met.

When thinking of my future, I have had the idea for the past couple of years that I would like to be an elementary school counselor. I have shadowed counselors before and I always liked their mission to help as many kids possible, no matter the situation. That is why I accepted this position at Lacey Spring Elementary School. I wanted to know more about the job and that's exactly what I got. My experience here has reassured me even further that this is the career that I want and that I am meant to be doing. Being here, watching Ms. Greene, gave me something to strive for within my career and I can't wait to one day have my own school and help even more children.

If I had to choose a site all over again, I would choose Lacey Spring Elementary School one hundred times over. The staff there is unbelievably kind, the kids are so sweet and they embrace new people with open arms. It is a wonderful way to learn more about counseling children, but also how the school system works, in general. You learn how the relationships work between other teachers, counselors, and staff members so all can work as a team to give each child every possibility they deserve. Overall, it was a wonderful experience that everyone who would be interested in working with kids should try.