



Plains Elementary School

Placement Description

Rockingham County Elementary School placement that offers practical foundational experience working with students.

Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

- One-on-one mentoring with 4-8 students (ages 5-12)
- Group counseling experiences (with counselor)
- Consultation with parents and teachers
- Classroom instruction assistance (Guidance Classes PK-5)
- Student Study, ASSIST, and other team service coordination meetings

Contact Information

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Read about students' experiences at this site below:



Spring 2019 – Rachel Miller

At Plains Elementary School, their mission is to “Educate Today’s Learner, Develop Tomorrow’s Future” and the school does this by promoting a safe and positive learning experience. The administration and staff make sure that their students know they are appreciated and accepted to provide a family atmosphere. The school teaches students pre-K through fifth grade with an average of three teachers per grade. There are many teacher assistants throughout the school who help with classroom management and extra services needed by some students. The school also has “specials” which are the traditional art, music, and library classes. My specific placement was in the school counseling department working alongside the one school counselor. His goal is to have an open door policy where students, staff, administration, and parents are welcome and encouraged to speak with him about any problems going on.

The opportunities working with Mr. Orebaugh are very hands-on and accurately represent the life of a school counselor. In a given day a student could observe individual counseling, group mediation, and classroom lessons. I personally interned a couple days a week and there was never a dull day where nothing was going on. Classroom lesson schedules are mapped out on a Google Document sign-up among the teachers, but situations need attention quite frequently throughout the day. Mr. Orebaugh lets you plan your own classroom lessons and activities, and is open to you teaching them to the students. I met with a couple individual students on a weekly basis to form relationships with them and to be their mentor, which was a very rewarding experience. For my capstone project, I designed and ran a five week program for some fourth-grade girls. Each week was focused on a topic such as self-esteem, boundaries, drama, and positive coping. Running my own focus group taught me management skills and how to form relationships to support students outside of the classroom. As the supervisor, Mr. Orebaugh is always interested in offering supervision and promotes a great learning environment. The only downfall with working within the school counseling department is listening to the challenges some children have to go through and observing how they process situations. During my time at the school I personally never had to report to Child Protective Services but I was aware of calls made and situations going on with specific students. Mr. Orebaugh was very good about processing and debriefing through supervision when these situations occurred, and answered any questions I had. The only limitation to report about my role is that some situations were very serious and it was not appropriate for me to sit-in during those, but that is to be expected. These situations were usually debriefed during supervision, as long as it was appropriate to do so.

Plains overall as a site placement is a great option for students engaging in field work as the school is very accepting of student learners. When I walked around and observed, I could see the many student teachers and volunteers the school allowed to help them gain knowledge and experience. The only negative thing about the school, and it is hardly negative, is the drive out to the school. It is about a thirty minute commute but the time can facilitate self-care processing after a busy day. My favorite part about doing my field work at the school was developing the relationships with the teachers and the students. It always brought me happiness in the morning when students would acknowledge me with a hug and by my name. Teachers were also accepting of me teaching their students and were excited to have me in the classroom.



Before engaging in field placement, I had my mind set on clinical mental health work in an out-patient counseling firm. I had an internship previous to this year working in a firm and I liked the idea of a set client list with the flexibility of the hours depending on booked appointments. After working in a school setting with the young children planning lessons, I have become fond of the school system setting working within the counseling department. I could see myself going back for another Master's degree in school counseling to try as a profession after working in out-patient for a while, or alongside it. I learned a lot about myself during this process and I also confirmed that I love working with children, and I definitely want to work with children during my career. Some of the skills I learned were how to manage a classroom setting, how to help children dealing with grief and mourning, and how to manage a day-setting working with numerous children at once. My observation at Plains was under the only school counselor so his days are always busy and I saw first-hand what that looked like, as well as the expectations placed on the counselor. Before coming to Plains I had solid general knowledge of how to work with children but through this experience I got to see how to deal with individual crisis situations. I was not as familiar with how to manage crisis and anger management, therefore that experience helped me grow with more skills. Even with the school counseling experience I received, there is always more to learn about the different grades besides the ones I worked with. My experience was limited to an elementary school type of counseling so I would have to learn about situations middle school and high school students go through, and how to counsel those as well.

Anyone who interns here, whether it be with a teacher or with the school counselor, will have a rewarding experience. Leaving the school and the children was hard since I have spent a lot of time with them and built special relationships. Being a young intern brings a fun dynamic to the classroom that might not be there and the kids are very responsive to extra help around the school. I never once felt uncomfortable at the site placement, with my responsibilities, or with the expectations of working with mental health within the school system.