Dear [Name]:

School counselors get pulled in many directions, and they often wonder if they are making a difference at all in the lives of their students and school communities. I know…because I am one. I rarely feel like I can get it all done. I rarely feel like I am meeting the many diverse needs of the students under my care. Between testing, monitoring academic progress, and attending to social and emotional needs, I used to ignore other equally important aspects of my work with students.

The part of my work I felt I “never got to” involved creating the time and space for career counseling. But one day, I was talking to my counterpart at another school, and she convinced me that this aspect of my job was one of the most important. She reminded me of the value of career exploration and of students developing a sense of curiosity and purpose about their futures. This curiosity leads students to try new experiences, ultimately shaping who they are and who they will become.

I started by reimagining what I thought was “career counseling.” This process led me to shed the notion that it had to happen in formal ways and only at certain times in the year. There were many informal ways to nurture a student’s interest, curiosity and preparedness about the future.

For example, I made talking to my students about their futures part of my everyday interactions with them. I never miss an opportunity to casually ask them about their futures, listen to their needs and then connect them with resources at my school. We have a thriving career pathways program — one that I didn’t fully appreciate or understand until I began prioritizing this part of my work. There are so many resources at my fingertips through the Ohio Department of Education’s [Career Connections](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Career-Tech/Career-Connections). So much is already in place, I just needed to re-educate myself and plug in.

Now that I have made this work a priority, I honestly can say my counterpart was right when she said doing so does not need to require an inordinate amount of time. In fact, it actually can save time. When students have a sense of purpose, they benefit in tangible and intangible ways. They become more focused, driven and confident. Their self-efficacy increases, and they are better able to handle the inevitable challenges life presents.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[School or district name]