

Louisville Hosts National Education Summit

Representatives from 40 state departments of education, U.S. Territories and national guidance and school counseling associations convene to address leadership issues in guidance and school counseling reform

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Louisville, KY. The National Consortium for State Guidance Leadership with representatives from over 40 states and U.S. Island Territories met at the Galt House May 14-16 to address how to strengthen leadership at the state level in order to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students through the implementation of comprehensive guidance programs. The Summit was sponsored by the U.S. Army Command at Fort Knox, the Kentucky Counseling Association, its affiliate, the Kentucky School Counselor Association, American Careers, and Kuder, Inc.

Dr. Norm Gysbers, from the University of Missouri and a national and international figure in the field of school counseling opened the summit on Wednesday evening with an historical overview of state guidance leadership and the continuing importance of state leadership in supporting comprehensive guidance and counseling programs that play an integral role in addressing key school reform issues such as the achievement gap, graduation rates, and successful entry into college, the workforce, or the military.

On Thursday morning, Lt General Benjamin Freakley, Commanding General of Army Accessions Command from Fort Monroe, Virginia, provided the keynote address of effective leadership skills. He noted that effective leaders, "...establish a climate of trust and cooperation among those we serve..." and it is the responsibility of effective leaders to "make complex issues simple." Lt. Gen. Freakley identified key traits of effective leaders including such characteristics as respect, duty, integrity, and moral courage.

A panel of representatives from professional organizations that represent professional school counselors addressed the issue of effective partnerships between state leaders and their organizations.

Richard Wong, Executive Director of the American School Counselor Association, Judy Whitaker, Vice President, Guidance Division of the Association for Career and Technical Association, Pat Martin Assistant Vice President College Board, National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, Ray Davis, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Peggy Hines, Director, National Center for Transforming School Counseling The Education Trust, and Dr. Richard Lapan, Program Coordinator for the School Counseling Program, University of Massachusetts, provided insight into the importance of effective partnerships with organizations that represent professional school counselors and how those partnerships can improve school counseling programs at the local level so that all students benefit from the work of their professional school counselor.

An additional highlight of the Summit was the discussion, led by Dr Rich Lapan and Dr. Jay Carey of the University of Massachusetts of a National Academy for state leaders who are responsible for overseeing guidance and counseling programs in their states. Such an academy, would provide both on-site and on-line professional development opportunities for enhancing the knowledge and skill level of these state leaders. "These types of professional development opportunities geared specifically toward state guidance leadership is currently lacking in the field of school counseling," according to Dr. Lapan. As one participant stated, " We need an academy that will help us improve on the work we are doing, especially in the area of developing accountability systems that work."

The National Consortium for State Guidance Leadership is an organization devoted to supporting the work of state guidance personnel in their efforts toward continuous improvement of school guidance and counseling programs throughout the country and the territories.

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