



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

- Classroom guidance
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling
- Indirect support services

Contact Information

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Read about students' experiences at this site below:

Spring 2024 – Liana Turturro

At Lacey Spring Elementary School, the school motto is “we strive to work towards healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthy relationships”. The faculty as a whole strives to put the students first and assure that they are receiving the best education and care while also being as healthy as possible in all aspects. During my time at Lacey Spring, I had numerous opportunities to be engaged with the students. Every day, my supervisor leads a lesson in a classroom about a topic of importance for that day. During those lessons, I get to sit with the students in our Community Circle and participate with them. There have been few times where my supervisor was needed somewhere else, so I was able to continue the lesson on my own with the students. On my last day, I was given the opportunity to lead a lesson by myself with the 5th graders. I chose to focus on the topic of friendship and social connection, giving the students tips about finding similarities in others to create relationships. I thought this was relevant because the new chapter of their lives is moving up to middle school and having to create new friendships. Each lesson lasts about 30 minutes and is usually held first thing in the morning, or later in the afternoon. I have also had the great experience of being a part of the lunch groups that we have every day. Each day during lunch, we take a few classes into my supervisor’s office to chat, have lunch, and play. On really nice days we go outside and eat at the picnic tables that are outside of the cafeteria. During those lunch groups I have seen how well the students interact with each other, especially when they get to be creative during play time. I had never been in a position where I am able to sit and observe a group of students’ interactions, and it has been extremely fulfilling to see the care they have for each other. Lacey Spring Elementary has many advantages as a school. One thing that I have enjoyed seeing is the amount of time the students get to spend outside. Rather than only having one specific time slot for recess, the teachers can take their students outside multiple times each day. But, with more students coming to the school next year, that will be changing. Each class will only get one time to go outside so it is more organized and there aren’t a large number of students outside all at once. Another advantage is how close the faculty is to one another. The relationships in the school are very meaningful, and I can see the trust that they have for one another. If one teacher needs coverage for their class during the day, other staff members will offer their time to help them. Everyone is very flexible and welcoming to change, which will be helpful next school year as more students and staff come to the school. One limitation that the school has is the low SOL scores on all subjects. It can be a lot of work to get test scores to increase, but hopefully with the right techniques the students can better their scores. Another limitation that relates to their lower test scores is their number of students who are chronically absent. It’s not as big of a number as other schools, but Lacey Spring has a much smaller student body. There were about 18% of students who were chronically absent last school year. The issue of chronic absenteeism can be hard to fix because of the range of reasons students are absent. Some of those issues are hard to control for, especially if students are sick or their parents simply don’t take them to school if they miss the



bus. With that aside, my favorite thing about spending time at Lacey Spring is the connections that I've made with the students. The students are all very outgoing and friendly which I realized very quickly. After spending so much time with them at their lunch tables, in lunch groups, and in classroom lessons, they now invite me to play with them at recess and give me a hug when they see me. It has been really special to see the students grow from just the short time that I've known them. One thing I learned at Lacey Spring that influenced my future career is finding the type of school counselor that I want to be. Some school counselors are always in their office, some are rarely in the hallways, and some don't go out to recess and play with the students. That is not the kind of school counselor that I want to be. From my time here, I learned that I want to be as present in the students' school day as possible. Being around them and spending time with them is how you build trust between one another. I want them to see me as a friend that they can turn to when they need help, and someone they feel comfortable sharing their feelings with. I can see that the students here see my supervisor in that light, and I would like to create the same kind of relationships with my future students as a school counselor. Information that I learned from Developmental Psychology has really helped me in this role. At Lacey Spring, there are students in grades Pre-K through 5th, so there is a wide range developmentally. I can use the knowledge I learned from Developmental Psychology when spending time with the different age groups that are so far apart from one another. For my contribution project, I want to improve the scores of 3rd grade reading SOL tests. After seeing how much help the students get with reading, spelling, and speaking, I thought it would be a good goal to have to increase the scores in that area. I was able to look at the scores on the SOL from last school year, and they are much lower than the state average. For my implementation, I created a brochure with information about the reading SOL, along with current statistics and tips for working on the standards at home. My hope was to send the 2nd grade students home with the brochure at the end of the year, and then send the 3rd graders home with the same brochure at the beginning of the following school year. This way, the students and families will be familiar with the information and be prepared when the SOL come around. With the new families joining the school, it will give them a chance to see the brochure, so everyone gets the same information. On my last day, the principal wanted me to send the brochure home with all of third, fourth, and fifth grade as well, so my goal was surpassed. I also made a version of the brochure in Spanish for the families who primarily speak Spanish at home. Overall, the early exposure to SOL information during the summer will lead to the students being better prepared for the SOL when they come around at the end of the year.

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.