

The Four Pillars of

Secondary Campus Structural Wellness

Focus, Stillness, and Play

Architecture of Attention

Focus, Stillness, and Play are the central concepts distributed across four operational pillars. Each pillar is organized through three consistent lenses: Core Focus, Instructional Action, and School Application.

Operational Pillar 1 — Focus

Core Focus

Focus as a central concept within mindful learning.

Instructional Action

Center Focus within instruction.

School Application

Apply Focus across the school setting.



Operational Pillar 2 — Stillness

Core Focus

Stillness as a central concept within mindful learning.

Instructional Action

Center Stillness within instruction.

School Application

Apply Stillness across the school setting.



Operational Pillar 3 — Play

Core Focus

Play as a central concept within mindful learning.

Instructional Action

Center Play within instruction.

School Application

Apply Play across the school setting.

Operational Pillar 4 — Attention

Core Focus

Attention as a central concept within mindful learning.

Instructional Action

Center Attention within instruction.

School Application

Apply Attention across the school setting.

Emily

Playground Pedagogy

A Playground Pedagogy resource

The Four Pillars of Mindful Learning



Focus

Sustained attention



Stillness

Quiet reflection



Mindful Learning



Play

Curiosity and experimentation



Attention

Integrated daily rhythm



Build mindful learning through focus, stillness, play, and attention.

Emily · Playground Pedagogy

A Playground Pedagogy resource



A PLAYGROUND PEDAGOGY RESOURCE

Emily

TOP 10

COUNSELOR POWER MOVES

TO SYSTEMICALLY REDESIGN YOUR SCHOOL

Counselor-led systems change for student wellbeing



Top 10 Counselor Power Moves to Systemically Redesign Your School

This practical handout presents ten counselor power moves to systemically redesign your school.

---

1. **Leverage Hard Happiness & Stress Data:**

Walk into administrative and department meetings armed with local, self-reported student happiness and burnout metrics—make cognitive wellbeing an undeniable line item on the leadership agenda.

2. **Cap Weekly Homework Hours:**

Advocate relentlessly for school-wide policies that put a hard, quantifiable ceiling on total assigned homework hours per grade level to protect student recovery time.

3. **Designate Screen-Free Quiet Zones:**

Partner with librarians and campus planners to establish strict "no-tech" sanctuaries in the library and other designated quiet spaces to safeguard true offline downtime.

4. **Demand Protected Secondary Break Times:**

Intercept attempts to swallow student lunch and break periods for remedial sessions, making unstructured peer connection an untouchable right on the master schedule.

5. **Establish Permanent, Non-Disciplinary Reset Spaces:**

Secure budget and real estate for dedicated, low-stimulation self-regulation rooms where students can decompress before returning to class.

6. **Lobby for a Dedicated Movement & Meditation Studio with a K–12 Spiraling Curriculum:**

Advocate for the budget, facilities, and certified coaching staff to establish a varsity-level yoga program with a dedicated campus studio—building a progressive, spiraling movement and mindfulness practice from primary through graduation.

7. **Build a Cell Phone-Free Culture & Co-Design Campus Tech Norms:**

Establish a cell phone-free baseline to support focus, then work toward minimizing 1:1 laptop use during non-instructional times. Involve students directly in sketching out non-punitive tech norms aimed at play, face-to-face connection, and active engagement away from screens.

8. **Abolish 11:59 PM Deadlines & Enforce In-Class Submissions:**

Lobby for strict policy boundaries that eliminate late-night LMS submission deadlines—mandating that all work be collected during the class period—and disable after-hours messaging to protect sleep and boundaries.

9. **Embed Mindfulness Directly into ATL & Curriculum Frameworks:**

Work alongside curriculum coordinators to weave executive-function and self-regulation competencies into everyday unit planning rather than isolated, one-off workshops.

10. **Partner with Curriculum Coordinators on Tech-Intentionality PD:**

Collaborate with instructional leaders to design targeted teacher professional development that upskills faculty on integrating technology purposefully without overwhelming student cognitive load.

Emily J. Thomas, Playground Pedagogy