



BEN SAMARA

EDUCATION, SEL, AI - TOGETHER

CONTACT

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EDUCATION

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Ewing, NJ, May 2009
Master of Arts: School Counseling

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Ewing, NJ, May 2006
Bachelor of Arts: Professional Writing
Minor: Interactive Multimedia

CERTIFICATIONS

Certificate in AI Prompting
New Jersey Institute of Technology, 2025

Khanmigo Training Certification
Khan Academy, 2025

Certified Trainer, Levels 1 & 2
SchoolAI, 2025

Certified Educational AI Trainer
Pedagog.ai, 2025

AI Certified Curipod Educator
Curipod, 2025

Generative AI for Educators
Grow With Google, 2025

Registered Athletic Administrator
NIAAA, July 2020

Supervisor Certification
State of New Jersey, January 2020

Director of School Counseling Certification
State of New Jersey, January 2020

School Counselor Certification
State of New Jersey, June 2009

PROFILE

Ben is a dedicated school counselor, coach, and entrepreneur with more than 20 years of experience. Known for a strong focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Ben incorporates innovative strategies to promote growth and connection in every facet of his work. Holding multiple certifications in Educational AI, Ben pioneers creative approaches that integrate technology into education. He firmly believes that AI, when used thoughtfully, can enhance student learning and foster - not hinder - social development and enhance human relationships.

EXPERIENCE

School Counselor 2009 - PRESENT
Riverside Elementary School, Princeton, N.J.

Addresses the social, behavioral, and academic needs of students through innovative lessons, targeted programming, and personalized 1:1 support. Integrates AI and new technologies to reimagine student engagement and foster prosocial skills for the future. Created the "Upstander" initiative, a widely praised character education program promoting respect, responsibility, safety, and positivity. Employs a forward-thinking approach to prepare students for academic success and meaningful, connected lives in an evolving world.

Founder & CEO 2024 - PRESENT
Samara Solutions Group LLC, Manalapan, N.J.

Partners with school districts to deliver dynamic workshops and personalized training on topics such as integrating AI into classrooms and professional practice, combining Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and AI to enhance personalization, student engagement, and human connection, and the Network of Support™ MTSS framework. Current projects include redesigning after-school programming for Princeton Public Schools and collaborating with The College of New Jersey to develop an educational AI certification course for educators and administrators.

Founder & CEO 2024 - PRESENT
Princeton AI Learning, LLC, Princeton, N.J.

Leads engaging workshops for students in grades three through twelve, promoting responsible, human-centered AI use to prepare youth for a tech-driven future. Empowers students by teaching essential life skills, such as growth mindset, empathy, collaboration, and critical thinking, alongside practical AI competencies. Signature workshops include "Responsible AI Use for Kids," "AI for Young Entrepreneurs," and "Using AI to Explore Passion Projects," providing hands-on experiences that equip students to become thoughtful digital citizens.

PUBLICATIONS

SAGE STANDS UP

Author, 2015
ISBN: 978-0692505151
An illustrated children's book about bullying prevention and mobilizing bystanders, designed primarily for use in the classroom.

REFERENCES

ANGELA SISO-STENTZ

Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Princeton Public Schools
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JOHN MCMICHAEL

Supervisor of School Counseling
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MAX ACHTAU

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FRANK HARRISON

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TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

LLMs: ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Llama, Grok

Educational AI: SchoolAI, Khanmigo, Curipod, NotebookLM, Grammarly, Canva, Magic School, Quillbot

Additional Computer Skills: Google Workspace Suite (Docs, Sheets, Forms, Slides), Google Classroom, PowerSchool, Adobe Photoshop, iMovie, Zoom, Google Meet, HudlTechnique, Social Media for Promotion (Twitter/Instagram/Facebook/TikTok)

EXPERIENCE (CONT'D)

Adjunct Professor

2019 - PRESENT

The College of New Jersey School of Education, Ewing, N.J.

Conducts engaging weekly individual supervision sessions with graduate students in TCNJ's Counselor Education program, providing personalized support and practical feedback throughout their practicum and internship experiences. Works collaboratively with practicum instructors to manage weekly supervision logs, progress notes, and evaluations, ensuring students feel supported and well-prepared for their counseling careers.

Camp Director

2014 - 2025

Princeton Recreation Department, Princeton, N.J.

Founded Princeton Recreation's track and running programs in 2014, growing participation from 50 initial registrations into a thriving community with over 500 annual enrollments across camps, clubs, and events by 2023. Led successful collaborations with PRD staff to launch multiple special-needs running initiatives. Recruited as Day Camp Director in 2022, redesigning camp operations post-COVID and establishing clear expectations, high-quality staffing, and proactive family communication, significantly reducing behavioral challenges. Gained extensive expertise in payroll, budgeting, program design, and effectively managing complex student situations.

Head Track & Field Coach

2011 - 2025

Princeton High School, Princeton, N.J.

Integrated SEL and positive psychology into coaching, fostering personal growth and team success. Led Princeton to its first NJSIAA Sectional title in 27 years and first Mercer County and State championships in 37 years. Expanded the Princeton Invitational Series from a three-team meet to a four-meet series with 30 teams and 2,000+ entries. Directed the MCTA/CVC Championships with nearly 1,000 entries annually. Delivered district-wide training on "Coaching with Character." Recipient of the 2018 NJSIAA Track and Field Sports Award and 2016 CVC Sportsmanship Award.