

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The district's guidance program provides important benefits to individual students by addressing their intellectual, emotional, social and psychological needs. It is developmental and includes sequential activities designed to address the needs of all students by helping them acquire competencies in career planning and exploration knowledge of self and others and education and vocational development.

The program addresses the needs of students in the elementary, middle and senior high schools as they encounter and deal directly with these and other important learning and life issues. The program is implemented in each school and is considered an integral part of each school's educational program. It is implemented by the certified school counselor with the support of teachers, administrators, students and parents.

Program Goals

At the elementary level, the guidance program promotes successful schooling by assisting students in learning the skills and attitudes necessary to be successful. It emphasizes decision-making skill development and awareness and beginning exploration of future educational and occupational possibilities. The program also stresses self-concept development and the acquisition of skills in developing interpersonal relationships.

The middle school guidance program focuses on the rapidly changing needs of pre-and young adolescents. It is especially sensitive to the struggles of middle school students for identity and for balancing the demands for academic, career and social competence. The activities begun at the elementary level are continued. However, they are adjusted to fit the special needs of middle school students. In addition, school counselors work with students to begin to develop education/career plans that cover graduation requirements and beyond. The plan takes into account students' interest, abilities and educational and career goals.

Building on the goals of the elementary and middle school, the guidance program in high school assists students in becoming responsible adults who can develop realistic and fulfilling life plans based on clear understandings of themselves and their needs, interests and skills. The educational career plans developed in the middle school are reviewed and updated periodically in accordance with students' postgraduation educational and occupational goals. Continued attention is given to assisting students to develop competence in decision-making, career planning, working with others and taking responsibility for their own behavior.

Program Activities

To accomplish these goals, the guidance program is an integral part of the district's total educational program. The program is developmental and includes sequential activities in elementary, middle and high school.

Counselors work with all students, parents, teachers, administrators and the community through a balanced program of direct and indirect services. Large and small group-structured learning units provide systematic instruction for all students in all grade levels. Counselors plan with teachers and then teach, team teach or assist

in teaching these coordinated units in classrooms or in other large group settings. Individual planning activities are provided to assist all students in planning activities. They are initiated in the upper elementary grades and continued and expanded in the middle and high school years. Individual, small group, personal and crisis counseling are available to all students. Consultation services concerning student behavior and academic progress are provided for parents, teachers and administrators. Referrals to other professionals in the school district or to agencies and institutions outside of the district are made as required or requested. Counselors support the overall district's educational program through general consultation activities and committee work. Counselors also support their own program through management and research activities, community outreach, business and industry visitation and professional development.

Program Components

The guidance program components organize the work of counselors into direct and indirect activities and services. They include the direct counselor services of guidance curriculum, individual planning and responsive services, and the indirect services of system support.

Guidance Curriculum includes structured developmental experiences presented systematically through classroom and large group activities, kindergarten through grade twelve. The curriculum emphasizes decision-making, self-understanding, career exploration and preparation and the improvement of study skills.

Individual Planning includes counseling activities to assist all students to plan, monitor and manage their own learning as well as their personal and career development. The counselor assumes responsibilities for assessments needed for supplementary education services including gifted, assessment for retention decisions, etc. Individual student educational career plans are developed beginning no later than eighth grade in collaboration with parents/guardians. Individual planning emphasizes test interpretation, course advisement, registration and the identification of short-and long-term goals.

Responsive Services includes counseling, consultation and referral activities to meet the immediate needs and concerns of students. Responsive services include personal counseling, crisis counseling, agency referral, consultation for parents, teachers and other professionals, support groups and problem-solving.

System Support includes guidance management activities that maintain and enhance the total guidance program. The counselor is responsible for coordination and administration of the district assessment program. Responsibilities in this component include staff and community relations, program evaluation, research projects, committee work and professional development.

Within the areas of counseling and guidance responsibility, the counselor enters into professional relationships with three segments of the school community: students, school staff members and parents/guardians. Consistent with the rights of the individual and the obligations of the counselor as a professional, the counseling relationship and resulting information is considered confidential. When appropriate, counselors will be responsible for explaining to students the ramifications of and exceptions to this confidentiality. All records and discussions of personal issues will be handled in a confidential manner. These records will be kept in the sole possession of the maker of the record and will not be accessible or revealed to any other person (except a temporary substitute for the maker of the records).

Referrals to Outside Agencies

The guidance counselor(s) and other professional staff members provide preliminary assessment of student problems and referrals to outside agencies, if necessary. The district will assist and cooperate with other agencies concerning the diagnosis and treatment of a referral student when applicable to his or her educational program in the school district. Except as otherwise required by law, costs for diagnostic and treatment services outside the district are the responsibility of parents or guardians.

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