

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Guidance and Counseling Program is established to assist all students to mature in self-understanding, self-responsibility, and decision-making ability, as well as to attain attitudes, skills, and values required of productive citizens in our pluralistic society.

Parents, teachers, administrators, and students initiate guidance and counseling referrals. Counselors outside the classroom setting usually provide services. Services may be presented in the classroom regarding such areas as test-taking skills, study skills, scheduling, career awareness, and transition planning.

Guidance counselors serve as referral and communication sources for parents, staff, and community agencies. Counselors monitor appropriate placement of students For the purpose of receiving optimal educational success.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

Kindergarten through Grade 6

The elementary counselor works within the educational" framework and the child's total home/school environment to enable the child to understand his identity and to learn to make choices and decisions which lead to effective functioning as a worthwhile human being. The school counselor is available to any student that might be having difficulties in the classroom, on the playground, or at home that may hinder his/her learning process.

The school counselors are available for all children, their parents, teachers, and other staff members who are involved with the child. As a member of the school staff, each counselor has many responsibilities. These can be grouped according to six major functions: counseling, consultation, coordination, conferences, testing, and instruction.

There are generally three types of referrals: student referrals, parent referrals, and school personnel referrals. (Teachers, Administration, Child Study Team, Nurse, etc.)

At the student's request, the counselor may talk with the student and if the ~# counselor feels continued counseling could be beneficial to the student, the parent is contacted and a permission form is sent home for parent approval. When a parent, teacher, or other school personnel refers a student for counseling, a permission form is sent home for parent approval.

Often a parent conference is helpful. This may be done at a scheduled conference or on the telephone. If parents wish to contact the elementary counselor , they may do so by phoning the individual school for an appointment. Parents will always remain the most important link in the chain of communication between school and the home in providing the best educational program for each child.

Each elementary counselor has had experience as a classroom teacher and possesses state certification for counseling and teaching.

REVISED: August 1994 July 1996

GUIDANCE COUNSELING SERVICES IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Elementary Guidance Counselor is a certified professional educator available for all children, their parents, teachers, and other staff members who are involved with the overall well being of each child. As a member of the school staff, each counselor has many responsibilities, which can be grouped according to these major functions: counseling, consultation/conferences, coordination, testing, and instruction.

A. COUNSELING

1. Individual counseling is a personal, one-to-one meeting between a counselor and a student during which time they work together on a problem or interest area. This is a private, trusting relationship, and kept as such unless a student's welfare is in jeopardy. The goal is to help facilitate personal growth and development, an understanding of the importance of physical, mental, and emotional health, the development of effective communication skills, and the fostering of interpersonal skills to relate well to others.
2. Group Counseling encompasses the same basic parameters as individual counseling, but in groups comprised usually of three to five children who share a common problem, interest or goal. These may include, but are not limited to, divorce, school phobia, improvement of behavior, and work study skills. Groups may use role-playing, directed discussions, interactive games, or other methods to improve communication skills and to help children learn to cooperate and solve problems together.

B. CONSULTATION/CONFERENCES assure a coordinated team effort to address the needs of the child in order to help create a positive school climate in which children can learn. This also enhances open communication to prepare children for the school environment and to identify those children who have special needs.

C. COORDINATION ensures access to the services of other professionals, including the Child Study Team members, mental health workers, and other community agencies that provide appropriate services and opportunities, which promote maximum development. Counselors are sometimes included as members of their schools' Pupil Assistance Committees.

D. TESTING SERVICES are provided on a needs basis at the request of the building administrators and as counselors' schedules permit.

E. INSTRUCTION Counselors are available *for* classroom lessons on an as needs basis. They may develop lessons supporting the conventional curriculum in the following instructional areas:

Study skills

Test-taking skills

Decision making conflict resolution

Transitional planning

Survival skills in today's world

F. ELEMENTARY SUBSTANCE AWARENESS COORDINATION: The District Coordinator (Substance Awareness Coordinator) is a certified professional who is responsible for the development of a prevention, intervention, and support system network within the district's elementary schools.