Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling

The district’s guidance program provides important benefits to 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 to acquire competencies in career planning and exploration, including appropriate course selection, knowledge of self and others, and educational and career development. The program is implemented in each school and is considered an integral part of the education program. It is implemented by ESA guidance staff with the support of teachers, administrators, career specialists, students, and parents.

A. Program Goals
   1. At the elementary level, the guidance program promotes education by assisting students in learning the skills and attitudes necessary to be successful learners. It emphasizes decision-making skill development and begins exploration of future educational and career possibilities. The program also stresses self-concept development and the acquisition of skills in developing interpersonal and social relationships.
   2. The middle school guidance program focuses on the rapidly changing needs of young adolescents. It is especially sensitive to the struggles of middle school students for identity, for balancing the demands for academic, career, and social competence. Programs begun at elementary level are continued. However, they are adjusted to fit the special needs of middle school students.
   3. Building on the goals of the elementary and middle school, the guidance program in the high school assists students in becoming responsible adults who can develop realistic and fulfilling life plans based on clear understanding of themselves and their needs, interests, and skills. Continued attention is given to assisting students to progress towards graduation and to develop competence in decision-making, career planning, working with others and taking responsibility for their own behavior.

B. Program Activities
   1. Guidance staff work with all students, and their parents, and with teachers, administrators, and the community through a balanced program of direct and indirect services. Large and small group-structured instructional activities provide systematic instruction for all students in all grade levels. Guidance staff plan these activities with teachers and then teach, team teach, or assist in teaching them in classrooms or in other large group settings. Individual planning activities are provided as needed to assist students to achieve academic success. Individual, small group, personal, and crisis counseling are available to all students.
   2. Consultation services concerning student behavior and academic progress are provided for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Referrals to other professionals in the school district or to agencies and institutions outside of the district are made as requested. Guidance supports the
district’s educational program. Guidance staff also support their own building program through management and research activities, community outreach, business and industry visitations, and professional development.

C. Program Components
The guidance program components are organized into direct and indirect activities and services. These include the guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services and system support services.

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

2. Individual Planning includes counseling activities to assist students to plan, monitor, and manage their own learning as well as their personal education and career development. Individual planning emphasizes test interpretation, informal counseling, educational counseling including course selections, college and post-secondary vocational-technical planning and career planning.

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

4. System Support includes indirect guidance management activities that maintain and enhance the total guidance program. Responsibilities in this component include staff and community relations, special research projects, committees, professional development, and student support teams.

All staff shall encourage students to explore and develop their individual interests in career and vocational technical programs and employment opportunities without regard to sex including reasonable efforts encouraging students to consider and explore “nontraditional” occupations for men and women.

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