

STUDENT GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Definitions

Counselor – For the purposes of this policy, a counselor is a school counselor as defined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Guidance Advisory Committee (GAC) – A committee composed of at least one (1) counselor from each grade level, a principal, teachers and others as determined by the superintendent.

General

The Columbia School District's comprehensive guidance program provides important benefits to all students at all grade levels by addressing their personal/social, academic and career development needs. Research indicates that a fully implemented comprehensive guidance program has a positive impact on student achievement and has the potential to increase attendance, reduce discipline referrals and improve Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores. In support of the district's efforts to improve student achievement, the Board requires full implementation of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program and will adhere to all of its standards. The program shall be implemented in each attendance area and is considered an integral part of each school's educational program. Guidance program objectives will be aligned with the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and student performance data. The program shall be implemented by certified school counselors with the support of district staff, students and external organizations and agencies.

Guidance Curriculum

Counselors will create and implement a written guidance curriculum that promotes students' academic, career and personal/social development. The Board will provide resources and support activities for implementation of a K-12 guidance curriculum. The guidance curriculum will be systematically reviewed and revised, and modifications to the guidance curriculum will be based on student data, school data and needs-assessment data collected at least every three (3) years.

Individual Planning

Individual planning activities help all students plan, monitor and manage their academic achievement as well as their personal/social and career development. The foundation for individual planning will be established during the elementary school years through guidance activities. Building on this foundation, the individual planning component of the guidance program will assist middle school students as they begin to plan for the future and will continue to support students in their planning endeavors until graduation. A four- to six-year Personal Plan of Study (PPS) will be initiated for

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students no later than the eighth grade and will minimally include assessment and advisement activities, collaboration with parents/guardians, and identification of long- and short-range educational career goals. The PPS will be reviewed annually and revised as needed.

Responsive Services

Responsive services are referrals and other actions taken by the district in response to the immediate needs and concerns of a particular student or identified needs and concerns of groups of students. The purpose of the responsive services component of the comprehensive guidance program is to work with students whose personal circumstances, concerns or problems are interfering or threatening to interfere with their academic, career or personal/social development. Responsive services will be implemented through individual counseling, small group counseling, consultation and referral.

Referrals shall be made in accordance with Board policies and district procedures. The superintendent, with the assistance of the GAC, will develop procedures for staff to use to identify students who may need a referral for assistance beyond that regularly provided by the counseling staff. All staff members who, in the course of their duties, have contact with students on a regular basis will receive annual training on these procedures.

In the event of a pandemic or other emergency, school counseling staff will assist students with personal and emotional issues. The district's emergency response intervention plan (ERIP) will include methods for continuing counseling support even in the event of a long-term school closure.

System Support

The Board recognizes system support as a crucial component in the full implementation of a comprehensive guidance program. System support of the comprehensive guidance program includes administration and management activities that support the program. The Board directs the administration to implement activities that support the guidance program, such as program management, fair-share responsibilities, professional development, staff-community relations, consultation, committee participation, community outreach, and research and development.

Program Goals

The district will strive to meet the program goals in each of the following areas:

1. Personal/Social Development
 - ▶ Assist students in gaining an understanding of self as an individual and as a member of diverse local and global communities by emphasizing knowledge that leads to the

recognition and understanding of the interrelationship of thoughts, feelings and actions in students' daily lives.

- ▶ Provide students with a solid foundation for interacting with others in ways that respect individual and group differences.
- ▶ Aid students in learning to apply physical and psychological safety and promoting the student's ability to advocate for him- or herself.

2. Academic Development

- ▶ Guide students to apply the skills needed for educational achievement by focusing on self-management, study and test-taking skills.
- ▶ Teach students skills to aid them as they transition between grade levels or schools.
- ▶ Focus on developing and monitoring personal education plans, emphasizing the understanding, knowledge and skills students need to develop meaningful personal plans of study.

3. Career Development

- ▶ Enable students to apply career exploration and planning skills in the achievement of life career goals.
- ▶ Educate students about where and how to obtain information about the world of work and postsecondary training and education.
- ▶ Provide students the opportunity to learn employment readiness skills and skills for on-the-job success, including responsibility, dependability, punctuality, integrity, self-management and effort.

Confidentiality

It is necessary for counselors to build trusting relationships with students and district staff; however, counselors are not permitted to promise students complete confidentiality. Counselors may at times be required to disclose information to parents/guardians, to report child abuse or neglect, to convey to district staff information necessary to better serve a student, or to report to supervisors as appropriate.

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Care should be taken in explaining to students, in a developmentally appropriate manner, the limits of confidentiality. Notice of the limits of confidentiality may be made by a variety of methods including classroom lessons, student handbooks, the district website and guidance counseling brochures in addition to oral notification of individual students.

District counselors have the responsibility to protect the confidentiality of student records and only release information in accordance with state and federal law and Board policy. Information transmitted or stored electronically must maintain the same level of confidentiality as traditional paper records. Care shall be taken to send sensitive information by a means that protects student identity.

Guidance Advisory Committee and Evaluation

The GAC will systematically review the district's comprehensive guidance program, including the K-12 guidance curriculum. The comprehensive guidance program will be systematically evaluated through the development and use of a comprehensive evaluation plan. The comprehensive evaluation plan will minimally assess the impact of the comprehensive guidance program on the Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) performance standards and other relevant criteria including, but not limited to, attendance, grades and behaviors.

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Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.

Adopted: 03/03/1997

Revised: 05/08/2006; 02/14/2011

Cross Refs: EBCA, Crisis Intervention Plan
IL, Assessment Program

MSIP Refs: 6.9, 7.7, 8.8

Columbia School District No. 93, Columbia, Missouri