
GUIDANCE SERVICES

A guidance program shall be incorporated into the district's educational program to aid pupils in making informed and responsible decisions and in using effective decision-making processes. The guidance program shall be developed and coordinated by the chief school administrator in consultation with teaching staff members he/she has identified as possessing necessary skills and abilities, to help pupils acquire the insights and knowledge they need to become autonomous, mature members of adult society in a democratic nation.

Counseling Services

Counseling services are provided to students primarily as a result of the following situations:

- 1) through contacts specified in IEPs;
- 2) in response to requests from teachers, students, parents, and administrators; or
- 3) as a result of situations that require urgent intervention.

Classified students often benefit from supportive counseling to address concerns about managing the stress of school work, social relationships, and family issues. The need for counseling through the IEP is discussed at a meeting of the IEP team, which includes CST members, teachers, and at least one parent. The IEP specifies frequency and duration of counseling contacts. Frequency may range from weekly, to bi-weekly, to monthly. Duration is usually 20 minutes for younger students and 30 minutes for older students, provided they are able to tolerate a session of that length. Counseling goals are included in the IEP, but counseling sessions often are used to address the more immediate concerns that students bring to the counselor. Although counseling goals are designed on an individual basis, they will typically address issues directly or indirectly related to academic success, such as improved completion of homework, improved social interaction with peers, and improved self-concept.

Requests for one-time, short-term, or ongoing counseling may come from parents, teachers, administrators, or students. On occasion, a teacher will notice that a student is "not himself" and will ask that I speak with the student to assess whether he/she is preoccupied or worried about something. At other times, it is very clear that a student is upset and needs immediate intervention that the teacher is not able to provide due to teaching demands, etc. If at all possible, I respond to these as a priority since emotional issues often interfere with the individual student's ability to work, and may be disruptive to others in the classroom. A follow up contact is made with the teacher to communicate

concerns that may affect classroom performance or behavior. Usually, a call is placed to **6164.2**

the parent to advise them of the counseling contact. This is especially true with younger students, but may be considered unnecessary for older students in a situation not requiring parental contact.

At times, a student will ask a teacher, or approach me directly, about having a counseling session. Usually, the student has a specific concern, often involving conflicts with peers, and, on occasion, with a teacher. At times, a student may need to “check in” with me without knowing a specific concern. Usually, it becomes evident after a brief time that something more specific is on the student’s mind. In these situations, I try to have him/her return to class as soon as possible after making an agreement to address the issue further if it remains unresolved after a brief talk.

Requests for counseling contacts come from parents who express concerns about their child’s mood, school performance, or peer relationships. These calls are often prompted by significant changes in the family, such as separation, divorce, illness, birth of a sibling, or loss of a loved one. As you know, our district has recently experienced some tragic events among families, as well as more routine moves out of district. These situations have prompted counseling contacts to assess the need for private counseling outside the school, or to help a student cope with anxiety about changes. In general, the student is seen the same day that the request is made. On occasion, scheduling does not allow for this, or the parent may agree the situation is not urgent.

Administrators may ask that a student be seen in a counseling session to evaluate behavior that does not clearly call for the type of disciplinary response that would be appropriate in other situations. This is most common in situations involving students with a history of emotional problems, or when the school is aware that a student is experiencing certain stressors that may play a role in the behavior. Most of these contacts involve one or two sessions, or possibly some short-term supportive counseling. On occasion, this type of contact will lead to ongoing in-school counseling that is not specified as part of an IEP (for non-classified students). A counseling contact in these situations does not preclude the use of consequences to address the behavior.

For situations in which in-school counseling does not appear adequate to meet a student’s needs, I contact parents to discuss how they might locate out of school mental health services. I try to normalize this idea for parents, pointing out that most children go through adjustment periods in life when they can benefit from additional support. I usually offer to help parents navigate their way through insurance or managed care systems, since this can be daunting.

Guidance Activities

Guidance activities include in school and out of school activities. Currently, students can participate in REBEL, the anti-tobacco program that encourages students to develop an activist approach to the issue of tobacco use among youth. Each year, the Warren County

Human Relations Commission sponsors a Youth Forum that brings together middle school age students from all over Warren County. For the past several years, OCS has

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sponsored 8 to 10 middle school students attending the conference, where students participate in workshops on issues of prejudice, bullying, and harassment. For the previous three academic years, I facilitated the Bully Prevention Committee, comprised of students in the 4th through 8th grades. The purpose of the committee was to educate students about bullying, strengthen students' skills in resisting bullying, and to foster a climate in the school to discourage bullying behaviors. In related activities, I periodically visit the elementary classrooms to read stories related to bullying. This activity is appropriate with younger students who learn well through the use of stories that enhance empathy, and in helping students recognize their own bullying behavior. In addition, I am available to meet with small groups of students when teachers observe behaviors among "cliques" that may lead to chronic conflict between groups of students.

First Reading: June 4, 2007

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Legal References:

<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:35-4.2	Career development program
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-19	Pupil records; creation, maintenance and retention, security and access; regulations; non-liability
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-19.1	Military recruiters; access to schools and student information directories
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-36	Employment certificates to part-time pupils; revocation
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:46-5.1	Basic child study team services; provision by boards of education and state operated programs
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:7-1.7	Equality in school and classroom practices
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:8-1.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Standards and Assessment
<u>See particularly:</u>	
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:8-3.2	
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:9-13.2	Substance awareness coordinator
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:9-13.7	Director of school counseling services
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:9-13.8	School counselor
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:10A-3 <u>et seq.</u>	School district lead standards-based instruction
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:10A-4.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Role of the Abbott district board of education

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4 Evaluation

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N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.1 Adoption of policies and procedures for the intervention of student alcohol and other drug abuse

N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.1 et seq.
Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts

N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7.1 et seq.
Student Records

N.J.A.C. 6A:32-13.3 Guidance and counseling

Possible

Cross References:

- 5000 Concepts and roles in pupil personnel
- 5010 Personal goals and objectives for pupils
- *5020 Role of parents/guardians
- *5113 Absences and excuses
- *5114 Suspension and expulsion
- *5120 Assessment of individual needs
- *5124 Reporting to parents/guardians
- *5125 Pupil records
- *5131 Conduct/discipline
- *5131.6 Drugs, alcohol, tobacco (substance abuse)
- 6142.1 Career education
- *6145 Extracurricular activities
- *6146 Graduation requirements
- *6164.4 Child study team
- *6171.1 Remedial instruction
- *6171.2 Gifted and talented
- *6171.4 Special education
- *6172 Alternative educational programs
- *6173 Home instruction