

## **Guidance and Counseling Procedure**

The district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program will be developed, implemented, managed, and evaluated using the following foundation, and delivery management and accountability systems. The overriding themes of the program shall be leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and systemic change. School counseling programs will be an integral part of students' daily educational environment and school counselors should be partners in student achievement.

The focus of the school counseling program for each student will be:

Academic Development: A) Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan. B) Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college. C) Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

Career Development: A) Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions. B. Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction. C. Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.

Personal and Social Development: A) Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others. B) Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals. C) Students will understand safety and survival skills.

The district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program will also assist: A) Families in learning about resources at the school and in the community; B) Teachers in creating a strong learning environment and in imparting to students the relevance of academics; C) Administrators in aligning counseling with the school's academic mission and providing data to evaluate student progress; and D) Community members in providing opportunities for students to explore and become involved as contributing members of their communities.

### **A. Foundation**

Like any solid structure, the school counseling program is built on a strong foundation. Based on our district's goals for student achievement, what every student should know and should be able to do, the foundation determines how every student will benefit from the district's school counseling program. The district's guidance and counseling program is based on the following foundational beliefs and mission.

#### **1. Beliefs and Philosophy:**

- a. **equalize opportunity** so that every student has meaningful choices for life after high school, not just those whose families can bring them along. We need to involve all educators in a school and give each person the tools to share counseling and guidance resources with students.

- b. **encourage student engagement** by building meaningful relationships between each student and at least one adult at school. Students who are engaged and invested in school, and believe that someone at school cares about them, are less likely to drop out. Our goal of personalization strengthens the belief for developing a delivery system for guidance and counseling that involves the entire staff of a school, not just those designated as counselors.
- c. **enhance student achievement** by helping students evaluate their own skills, interests, and accomplishments, challenge themselves with more rigorous courses, and understand the relationship between school and life after graduation.
- d. **involve families** by sharing comprehensive information about students' progress and engaging them in students' decisions. The school team will find innovative and inclusive ways to welcome families into the school, to share information with them about the major milestones their students will face, and to engage them as advocates to guide and advise their children.
- e. **strengthen community** among students, within the school, and in the wider neighborhood. Strengthening community is an extension of the belief that students must be engaged, or have "heart," to succeed academically in school and to make wise choices for life after graduation. Students need to feel that adults at school know and care about them. But they also need to understand their responsibilities, as members of the school community and, as well, of the larger community of their neighborhoods, their town, their country, and the world at large.

## 2. Mission:

Every student in Mary M. Knight Schools deserves equal access to the information and skills that will prepare them for the opportunities of the future.

**Our guidance and counseling mission is to provide to each student, clear, careful, and creative planning for life beyond high school.** Our main goal is to help students overcome problems that impede learning and to assist them in making educational, occupational, and life plans that hold promise for their personal fulfillment as mature and responsible men and women.

## Delivery System

The district's delivery system describes the activities, interactions and methods necessary to deliver the program. Based on the district's core beliefs, philosophies and missions identified in the foundation, the delivery system describes the activities, interactions and methods necessary to deliver the program.

To maximize student achievement and optimize the effectiveness of the school counseling program, counseling duties will focus on the following four delivery system components.

1. Curriculum: The curriculum will be structured to ensure that every student has access to guidance and planning and that students receive information for making thoughtful decisions about the future. The curriculum will be organized and

delivered to help students develop academic, career and personal and social development, with particular emphasis on the skills students will need to succeed in the community and in their careers as adults in a twenty-first century world. Twenty first century skills include communication skills, collaboration skills, self-direction and personal responsibility, and the ability to assess one's own knowledge and become a lifelong learner. Classroom guidance through developmentally appropriate guidance curricula will also help all students make smooth transitions from one educational level to the next and can support assessment practices to measure the impact on student learning.

2. Individual Student Planning: the comprehensive guidance and counseling program will provide opportunities for students to assess their progress, explore their interests and skills, and work with their families and teachers to learn what they need to do to realize their goals for life after high school and to prepare for the careers and opportunities of the 21st century.
3. Responsive Services: The comprehensive guidance and counseling program will be organized to allow counseling staff to respond effectively and efficiently to students' personal and social concerns. Counselors will provide staff with resources to assist students in succeeding in school by identifying and removing barriers to learning. Counselors will play a vital role in the prevention of bullying, harassment and intimidation; in suicide intervention and prevention, and in crisis response planning and intervention. Counselors will also work with families to refer students to community support services.
4. System support: Counselors will meet regularly with administrators and participate in professional development activities. School counselors will use state and national program standards to guide the management and evaluation of the school counseling program.

#### **B. Management System**

The district's guidance and counseling management system will ensure that its program is organized, concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school's needs. The components of the management system include:

1. Management agreements: the written agreement between the principal and counselor(s) on the implementation of the school guidance and counseling program;
2. Advisory council: Students, parents, teachers, counselors, administration and community members appointed to review counseling program results and to make recommendations;
3. Use of data: School counselors will demonstrate that each activity implemented as part of the program was developed from a careful analysis of students' needs, achievement and/or related data;
4. Action Plans: For priority goals, counselors will develop action plans outlining how the desired results will be achieved. Each plan will contain: a) student competencies addressed; b) a description of the activity; c) data driving the decision to address the competency; d) a timeline in which the activity is to be completed; e) who is responsible for delivery; e) means of evaluating student success; and e) expected results for students;

5. Analysis of use of time: School counselors will spend the majority of their time in direct contact with students. Duties will focus on comprehensive program delivery and direct counseling services; and
6. Calendars for the purpose of organization and communication: Counselors will develop and publish master and monthly calendars to keep students, parents, teachers and administrators informed.

**C. Accountability**

School counselors will collect and use data that link the program to student achievement.

The evaluation data will include:

1. Result reports: Results data to ensure programs are carried out, analyzed for effectiveness and modified as needed;
2. School Counselor Performance Standards: The school counselor performance evaluation will reflect the state certification standards and the counselor performance standards of the American School Counselor Association; and
3. Program Audit: To guide future action within the program and to improve future results for students.

**Adopted: December 15, 2008**

**Revision:**