Confirming a Foundation

Running head: CONFIRMING A FOUNDATION

Developing a Comprehensive School Counseling and Guidance Program from the ground up: Confirming a foundation—Mission Statement and Program Philosophy

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2004

Professional Responsibility: This project has been reviewed by collegial professional peers and had been submitted for on-line publication before being evaluated by faculty members from Portland State University. I am the author and take full responsibility for the project’s contents and quality. This work serves as a baseline for my professional school counselor skills and demonstrates what I have done to develop and/or assess my actions directed toward serving students and schools. In other words, this is a snapshot or one indicator of my work at this state of my career.

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Abstract: The objective of this paper is three-fold: 1. To review existing literature and discuss the general rationale for developing a mission statement and program philosophy for a school’s comprehensive counseling and guidance program, based on national & state standards as well as the characteristics of a particular school district and school, 2. To assess needs and expectations in relation to the school’s counseling and guidance program, 3. To outline and complete the development of a counseling program mission statement and philosophy based on this information.

Introduction & Rational

Several months into a 600-hour internship, required in the third year of my graduate program, I was honored with an offer to take over a paid school counseling position at another elementary school in the district. Upon accepting the position, I found myself immediately immersed in the enormous responsibilities that come not only with being a new counselor, and the sole counselor for a student population of over 500 kids, but also taking over mid-way through the school year. Even though the position was only temporary, I decided to approach my work in the school as if I was going to be there long term. Along with providing classroom guidance curriculum lessons, group and individual counseling with students, working with parents, administration, and staff, and helping to create a positive school-wide climate, I was also aware of the need for accountability in the school’s comprehensive counseling and guidance program, in accordance with national & state standards.

Dissecting a school counseling program one component at a time can be a daunting task. Because of the daily responsibilities of the job, it simply did not seem feasible at the time to review and make adjustments in all program areas. I was additionally mindful of how much change would ultimately serve the best interest of students and staff mid-way through
the school year. It appeared most useful to focus on the foundation of the program first, in order to have something solid to build upon. For these reasons, I chose to concentrate on developing the first two program foundation components from *Oregon’s Framework for Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs* (*Oregon Framework*) (Oregon Department of Education, 2003)—the mission statement and program philosophy. I began with a review of existing literature, and thorough research of national, state, district, and school community expectations of the counseling program. I then assessed staff needs and expectations, as well as collecting data from other district elementary counselors. In the end, I used all of this information to create a mission statement and program philosophy to guide my comprehensive school counseling and guidance program.

**Literature Review**

School counselors continuously face the challenge of effectively meeting the needs and facilitating learning of all students. Taking into consideration such characteristics as cultural identity, disabilities, developmental age, learning styles, family history, and more, there is a lot that the counseling and guidance program must consider (Baker, 2000, Green & Keys, 2001, and D’Andrea & Daniels, 2001). School counseling programs must also keep abreast of the particular life situations facing today’s students and adjust the counseling program accordingly (Paisley & McMahon, 2001).

In order to achieve the overall goal of supporting a positive teaching and learning environment for each student, school counselors must include a variety of components to their program. These various pieces of the overall program should ideally include classroom guidance curriculum, individual and small group counseling, consultation and collaboration
with parents, staff, community members and referral sources, program evaluation, and building a positive school-wide climate (Rye & Sparks, 1997).

According to Johnson & Johnson, there is a new trend towards accountability of all school programs including counseling and guidance (2003). This renewed emphasis includes focus on student results, program evaluation, counselor evaluation, and teaming with others. It is emphasized that counselors should strive to answer the question “how are students different as a result of the guidance program?” (2003, p. 185). In addition, Rye & Sparks contend that each school district should “develop its own reasons for having a school counseling program” (1997, p. 263). Districts must be able to defend the importance of counseling services in its schools, and the rationale for why school programs exist, should be available for review (1997).

One way to assess student, staff, school community, and district needs and expectations is through the use of needs assessments or surveys. According to Lusky & Hayes, using a needs assessment produces useful input, as well as provides a way to articulate general and specific needs (2001). Needs assessments create a path of communication, make consumers feel that their voices are heard, and assured them that their needs are being addressed (2001). Furthermore, Lusky & Hayes contend “it is important for counseling programs to respond to consumer needs” (2001, p. 26). Therefore, not only are needs assessments a means of communication, they are a vehicle to create program goals, which can lead to meaningful and relevant changes (2001). Needs assessments or surveys combine Likert ranking scales, anecdotal responses, ranking order questions, opinions, and narratives (Rye & Sparks, 1997, Lusky & Hayes, 2001). Such assessments provide a systematic way to glean information, which counseling program goals and practice can be based on.
Focusing on key components of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program provides a way to identify program purpose and results. The program mission statement and program philosophy are two such components. Green & Keys contend that comprehensive counseling and guidance programs that do not have strong foundation elements, simply cannot meet the expanding needs of today’s student population (2001). Adding results-based language to the mission statement and program philosophy speaks to the growing need to support the relevance of counseling and guidance programs through data.

National & State Standards

American School Counselor Association’s National Standards for School Counseling Programs

The National Standards for School Counseling Programs (National Standards) provide guidance for systems interested in organizing comprehensive counseling and guidance programs (Paisley & Hubbard, 1994). These standards stipulate that a standards-based program is cognizant of all students’ academic, career, and personal/social development. The standards further indicate that a successful program hinges on the collaboration between counselors, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. The standards provide structure to school counseling and guidance programs by defining what a quality program should include, and by offering guidance to measure its effectiveness (Dahir, et. al. 1998). The National Standards also stipulate that the role of the school counselor is to advocate, provide leadership, and improve school success for every student. Additionally, the standards indicate that school counselors should ideally provide support to the teachers and the whole school community in promoting the most positive teaching and learning environment possible (1998).
Within Oregon’s Framework for Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs (Oregon Framework), four overlapping sections exist (ODE, 2003). Each of these four pieces: Foundation Framework, Content Framework, Resources Framework, and Continuous Improvement Framework, consist of several components, all which strive to support students in four developmental domains. The four student domains of learning are: Learning to Learn (Academic), Learning to Work (Career), Learning to Live (Personal/Social), and Learning to Contribute (Community Involvement), which align with the National Standards’ focus on academic, career, and personal/social development (ODE, 2003). The Oregon Framework strives to systematically outline how to most effectively support each student in a proactive and preventative manner, as they become successful life long learners.

District and School

East County School District

Mission

According to the Elementary School Handbook from East County School District (ECSD), ECSD students are expected to have counseling and guidance services available to them at all grade levels. It is the district’s ideal that these services emphasize problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, and overall social and emotional development. Services are to be proactive and prevention focused (2003). In order to provide some continuity within counseling programs in the district elementary schools, as well as making an effort to align with the aforementioned mission of the district, an anti-violence guidance curriculum was adopted district-wide at the elementary level. This curriculum focuses on empathy development, interpersonal problem-solving skills, and anger management. It aims to teach children to change the attitudes and behaviors that contribute to
violence. The curriculum teaches social skills to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children and increase their level of social competence (Committee for Children, 2004). The use of this curriculum by counselors is a district goal as part of the counseling and guidance program.

To provide additional guidance and accountability, counselors who are new to the district are mentored by a more seasoned counselor during their first year. Additionally all district elementary counselors meet for group supervision and professional development once a month, together with the head of counseling and special education.

Demographics

ECSD is a growing district currently serving a student population of 9834 students. According to the district website, ECSD has 5038 students in its 9 elementary schools, and 3996 students in two middle schools, one high school, and one alternative middle/high school. A third middle school is currently being built, and is set to open for the 2005-2006 school year. Based this high enrollment, current class size has increased district wide, and child to teacher ratio within the classrooms often reaches close to 30:1. Exact numbers for student-to-teacher ratio in all schools were not available for review. While the ratio of 30:1 is comparatively high, it does not consider other adults who have contact with students, such as aides, specialists, and volunteers. Greatschools.net contends that the district wide student-to-adult staff member in ECSD is 19.7:1 (2004). Encouragingly, when you consider all of the staff members available to support students, the data suggests more adult peer contact per student than the numbers originally depicted.

ECSD is located on the outskirts of a major metropolitan area that is rapidly continuing to spread outward. According to the 2000 census, families with children make up
34.8% of the ECSD neighborhood population. Seventy-five percent of the population within
ECSD’s boundary area is white, 8.5% Asian, 8.2% Hispanic, 2.5% Black, 1.0% Native
American or Alaskan, 0.2% Native Islander, and 4.5% other. The census notes that
percentages may not equal 100% because of rounding, and also due to respondents identifying
themselves as Hispanic in multiple race categories. As it is common for families of the same
or similar ethnic backgrounds to live in close proximity, the ECSD’s neighborhoods tend to
have high concentrations of similar ethnic representation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

East Elementary School

According to the East Elementary School (EES) web site, the school’s mission states
“students, staff, and community members working together as life long learners to
successfully meet present and future challenges” (2003). This mission statement clearly
embodies many of ECSD’s ideals, as well as aligns with the national and state standards for
comprehensive school counseling and guidance programs.

At the onset of the 2003-2004 school year, EES’s total student enrollment was 490.
Of this population, there were 246 male students, and 244 female students. Sixty-one percent
of students were classified as White, 7.8% Black, 16.9% Hispanic, 13.5% Asian, and 0.8%
American Indian/Alaska Native. As of February 2004, the overall population of students at
EES had grown to 508.

It must also be noted that EES has a characteristically large Eastern European
population is embedded within the “white” category of ethnicity. Currently, within EES,
almost 20% of the student body speaks Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, or Bosnian at home. .
Along with the Eastern European languages, 46.3% of the students at EES speak a total of 13
different languages other than English, including Spanish (34%), Vietnamese (13.6%),
Confirming a Foundation

Chinese (4.7%), Laotian (1.7%), Tagalog (1.7%), Cambodian (0.9%), Cantonese (0.9), Armenian (0.9%), and Somalian (0.42%). In total, over one-third of the student population at EES qualifies for English as Second Language (ESL) services. This large ESL population serves as just one characteristic of the families at EES that must be taken into consideration when developing the schools’ comprehensive counseling and guidance program.

Another meaningful characteristic of the EES student population is that 65.8% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Free and reduced lunch status is based on household income and number of people living in the house. Many of the families in the community of EES have a low economic status, thus the high percent of free and reduced lunches granted. Along with the high volume of ESL students, this increasing number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch is a telling characteristic of the EES student body.

Based on high student enrollment district-wide, average class size is 31.75 (Greatschools.net, 2004). While 12 of the 17 regular classrooms at EES qualify for educational assistants, with the Kindergarten classroom having two, classroom teachers still face the challenges of full classrooms and a high needs population, often with limited assistance. Pairing the diverse ethnic population, low socioeconomic status, and an average classroom size of 31.75 students, the picture of the EES school culture begins to come into focus.

Components #1—Mission Statement & #2—Program Philosophy

In the Oregon Framework many guideline, ideals, and specific program components exist. For reasons outlined above, this paper’s focus is on two of these components in the Oregon Framework: the program’s mission statement and philosophy. Essentially the
foundation framework discusses what defines the program. The framework stipulates that the mission statement, along with the program philosophy and district policy, seek to answer the question “why do we deliver comprehensive school guidance and counseling?” (2003). The foundation framework of the counseling program is outlined such that the counseling program’s mission statement is listed as component #1, under Section A, and the program philosophy is listed as component #2 (ODE, 2003).

Individual program mission statements exist to ensure that school counseling and guidance programs engage in best practice, establish a structure for innovations, create one vision, and provide an anchor in the face of change (ODE, 2003). Mission statements help hold the school counseling and guidance program accountable to the staff, students, parents, and others in and around the school community. The mission statement should ideally align with the overall mission of the school district, and clearly define the purpose of the school’s counseling and guidance program (2003).

The program philosophy is a key component of any comprehensive school counseling and guidance program, as it speaks to rationale behind the very existence of the program itself. The philosophy of a comprehensive counseling and guidance program “provides a foundation for the program and a rationale for the program content” (ODE, 2003 p. 10).

**Development of the Mission Statement & Program Philosophy** for EES

Based on the national and state standards, along with existing literature reviewed for this project, it is clear that the particular characteristics and needs of the individual school, expectations of the district, and traits of the surrounding community, must be taken into consideration when developing components of a comprehensive school counseling and guidance program. In order to craft a mission statement and program
philosophy for EES, it was necessary to get a sense of existing needs from the perspective of others in the building, as well as individual’s familiar with the history and current practice of elementary school counselors in ECSD. Critical questions addressed included: What is the role of the school counselor? What is the most effective allocation of the counselor’s time? How can the counseling program best support all staff and students within the building?

Procedure

Instruments: In order to integrate the voice of the staff into the development of the counseling program mission statement and program philosophy at EES, views of the school counselor’s role, time allocation, and maximum support from the counseling program were measured by a paper and pencil survey developed specifically for this project. Thirteen separate characteristics of a comprehensive school counseling and guidance program—according to national and state standards, district expectations, and specific school considerations—were listed as follows: counseling curriculum in the classroom, pull-out small groups, school wide climate (positive school/spirit committee), individual counseling with students, consultation, building bridges to the community, referrals to outside resources, student advisory team (BEST), IEP/504 eligibility paperwork, parent support groups/activities, classroom observations, duty, and other. Participants were asked to rank the top five components 1-5, with 1 being the most important, until the top 5 out of 13 were indicated. In the next section of the survey, participants were invited to respond to the following three questions: 1. How can I best support your individual class or students? (what topics would you like me to cover, more/less groups, etc.). 2. In your opinion, what is the ideal classroom curriculum/small-group counseling schedule? (A/B weeks, every week,
year long, half of the year, etc.). 3. Briefly describe what you feel the role of the school counselor should be (for the complete Staff Survey, see Appendix A).

The second means of assessment was a two-question e-mail survey posed to the 9 district elementary school counselors in ECSD. Survey questions were as follows: 1. What are the major components of your counseling program? (classroom curriculum, small groups, individual counseling, other duties). 2. How do you allocate your time during the week, months, and school year between these components? (A/B weeks, every week, first half of the year/second half of the year, etc.) (for Elementary School Counselor E-mail Survey, see Appendix B).

Respondents: Data to guide the development of the counseling program mission statement and program philosophy was collected from two distinct groups: EES classroom teachers and specialists, and other ECSD elementary counselors. The Staff Survey was administered to participants at an EES staff meeting. This paper-and-pencil assessment was given to all regular classroom teachers who attended the meeting, including 1 Kindergarten, 3 first-grade, 3 second-grade, 2 third-grade, 2 fourth-grade, 2 fifth-grade, and 3 sixth-grade teachers (n=16). One third-grade regular classroom teacher was out of the building on maternity leave at the time of survey administration. The survey was not administered to her long-term substitute. Survey’s were also given to certified specialists in the building, including two English as Second Language (ESL) teachers, Title One reading teacher, Reading 1st Grant reading coach, Education Resource Center teacher ((ERC) i.e. special education), Speech & Language Pathologist, Librarian, computer lab teacher, physical education (PE) teacher, and one music/band teacher (n=10). The second music/choir teacher was not present at the meeting. Participants were given an explanation as to the purpose, scope, and design of the survey, and
asked to complete it within a certain time frame to allow for conscientious data compilation.

The assessment was designed so that participants could work on his or her own, and respond with anonymity, thus eliciting true non-biased responses.

The Elementary Counselor E-mail Survey was sent out to the other nine elementary school counselors in ECSD. Participants were asked to respond via e-mail to the questions posed, and given a time frame in which to do so. Due to the mode of electronic data collection utilized, the identities of the respondents were known.

Results

Of the 26 possible respondents to the Staff Survey, 19 (73.1%) returned surveys (see Appendix C, Table 1). Some respondents chose to indicate name or grade level on their returned surveys, but not all did so. No further assessment based on individual characteristics such as grade level was conducted, due to the anonymity of most respondents.

Upon reviewing the survey results, it was clear that four program components received both the most overall votes, and the highest ranking. Participants chose individual counseling with students (n=17) (89%), counseling curriculum in the classroom (n=16) (84%), pull-out small group counseling (n=16) (84%), and student advisory team (BEST) (n=13) (68%), the highest number of times overall. Breakdown of the other ranked items are as follows: referrals to outside resources (n=10) (52%), school-wide climate (n=9) (47%), parent support groups/activities (n=7) (37%), IEP/504 eligibility paperwork (n=4) (21%), consultation (n=3) (16%), building bridges to the community (n=3) (16%), classroom observations (n=2) (11%), duty (n=0) (0.0%), and other (n=0) (0.0%).

In ranking counseling program components from highest to lowest level of importance, respondents gave counseling curriculum in the classroom the most number “1’s,”
(12 out of 16 respondents (75%)), thus showing that EES staff views this as the most important component of the school’s counseling program. The next most important component according to staff report is pull-out small group counseling. This survey item received the #2 ranking from 9 out of 16 respondents (56.2%), with an average ranking of 2.56. While survey participants chose individual counseling with students the most number of times over all, the ranking order of this item was fairly evenly spread between #’s 1-5, and the averaged ranking was 2.73. It can therefore be concluded that individual counseling with students ranks as the #3 component overall. Based on it’s average ranking of 3.15, and total number of respondents (n=13) student advisory team (BEST) ranked as the #4 overall counseling program component. Other component averages are as follows: referrals to outside resources (3.7), school-wide climate (3.44), parent support groups/activities (4), IEP/504 eligibility paperwork (3.75), consultation (2.33), building bridges to the community (4.33), classroom observations (2), duty (0), and other (0) (see Appendix C Table 3).

Of the 10 district elementary school counselors, 9 were invited to respond to the Elementary Counselor E-mail Survey. The tenth counselor is the author of this paper. In total, 4 out of 9 (44%) responded to the survey (see Appendix C, Table 2).

Both the Staff Survey and the Elementary Counselor E-mail Survey included a written response portion. Of the 19 Staff Survey participants, 17 (89%) responded to at least one of the three questions. These narratives ranged from a few general statements, to paragraphs of in-depth opinions and ideas. All of the Elementary Counselor E-mail Survey participants responded in narrative form, as this was the entire scope of the survey (for a complete listing of written staff and counselor responses see Appendix D).
Discussion

The high percentage of Staff Survey respondents is a good indication that the staff at EES take pride in the services we provide to students, as well as proving their vested interest in the school’s counseling and guidance program. Upon reviewing results of the Staff Survey, it is also clear that the staff at EES has strong opinions about what is important to include in the comprehensive school-counseling program. The survey additionally showed how the EES staff would ideally prioritize particular components of the counseling program, what components they feel are important, and what they do not feel the counseling program necessarily needs to encompass. Specifically it was fairly telling to see the delineation between the top four and bottom four rank order components. It was interesting to note how few participants indicated the importance of the counselor’s role in special education paperwork/case management. An additional point of interest, is that no respondents filled in their own ideas in the other category, and that no one marked duty as an key responsibility of the school counselor.

When asked the first written question (How can I best support your individual class or students? What topics would you like me to cover, more/less groups, etc.), 14 out of 17 (82%) who gave any written feedback responded. Respondents gave many helpful ideas that will help to guide the counseling program in the future. Comments ranged from general supportive statements (“You’re already doing it!”), to specific topic ideas or opinions (“I like the Second Step program,” “I see similar problems with teasing, bullying, and name-calling year-to-year”).

The numeric results from the Staff Survey concluded that EES staff highly values having guidance curriculum taught in the classrooms. Furthermore, information gleaned from
the narrative portion of the survey shows that of the 12 (63%) participants who responded to question #2, *(In your opinion, what is the ideal classroom curriculum/small-group counseling schedule? (A/B weeks, every week, year long, half of the year, etc.)),* all 12 (100%) indicated that the counseling program should include whole or small group counseling with students year-long. Of these 12, 8 (66.7%) stated their preference to have counseling each week, for consistency. Compare this number to the 3 (25%) respondents who stated their desire for guidance curriculum to be taught in the classroom every other week (A/B schedule).

The majority of answers to question 3 were fairly vague overall, yet most gave some insight as to how EES staff views the role(s) of the school counselor. Of the 17 respondents who gave some form of narrative feedback, all 17 (100%) answered question 3. Staff opinions of the counselor’s role in the school included: advising teachers and staff, being an available resource for parents, supporting the classroom teacher, students, staff, and principal, being visible, providing behavioral support, building rapport, being a source of information, coordinating testing, and conducting whole group, small group, and individual counseling.

While the *Elementary Counselor E-mail Survey* provided interesting information, and ideas, no systematic representation can be deduced based on the variety of the responses. It appears that each counselor has his or her own system for what works, which is undoubtedly based on a multitude of factors including personality, experience, school population, and education.

Based on information gleaned from data collected, it is certain that a thoughtful mission statement and program philosophy can be composed. The mission statement and program philosophy for the EES counseling and guidance program, can now undeniably
speak to the culture of the school, needs of the students, and expectations of the staff (see Appendix E).

Limitations

One potential limitation of the Staff Survey is that it was not administered to the school support staff along with classroom teachers and specialists. EES currently has 16 support positions including secretaries, cooks, custodians, and ESL, ERC, Title 1, and health assistants, as well as 12 classroom assistants. These 28 men and women work directly with students, as well as behind the scenes of the school, and are an integral part of the educational success of the students and overall school function. Nevertheless, individuals in positions of support do not generally attend staff meetings, so administration of the survey in a systematic manner would have been problematic. Furthermore, these positions serve as support to the regular classroom teachers and specialists, and most do not serve as school policy decision makers. Considering these points as well as the fact that some survey questions addressed issues directly impacting the scope of the school-counseling program in the classroom, it seemed most relevant to glean information from classroom teachers and specialists. Therefore, it was determined that administration to all support staff was not appropriate.

Another limitation of this project the lack of input from parents, students or others in and around the ECSD community. While care was taken to consider national and state standards, as well as general district expectations, specific school characteristics, no data on parent/family, student, or surrounding community needs or expectations was collected. In order for needs to be comprehensively assessed, opinions of students, parents, and support staff should ultimately be included (Rye & Sparks, 1997 and Lusky & Hayes, 2001).
One last limitation of the staff survey is due to the anonymity of the respondents. Because respondents were not asked to identify themselves, it was not possible to separate survey results by certain potentially useful characteristics including sex, classroom teacher/specialist, or grade level. While it is uncertain just how relevant this identification could be, it may be useful in the future to determine how needs compare by certain qualities including grade levels, primary to intermediate, new teachers to seasoned teachers, or male to female.

Conclusion

The goal of this survey was to provide data that reflects national and state standards, district expectations, specific school considerations, my own vision for the school counseling program, as well as that of others affected by the program. Survey questions were based on national and state standards, existing literature, district policy, and general school vision. It also took into consideration the population of the school and surrounding community. This data was then used to create a counseling program mission statement and program philosophy that is thoughtful and relevant. Along with the original goal of developing the EES counseling and guidance program mission statement and philosophy based on relevant data, this project proved very useful in providing concrete data that indicates what components of the counseling program EES staff feel are important. The data also suggests how to best allocate daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly time to the different components of the program, to most effectively meet the needs of the EES community.
Appendix A

Staff Survey

The following brief survey intends to answer the question: **How can I best support you in our collaborative efforts to help all students succeed to the best of their ability at East Elementary School?** I am curious about where we can go together, and would like to hear your voice. Please return the surveys to my box. Thank you for your time! Abby

The following are some important components of the counselor’s job from my perspective. Please choose the top 5 in your opinion, keeping in mind your own classroom and students, as well as the school culture as a whole. Please rank from 1-5.

- [ ] Counseling curriculum in the classroom
- [ ] Pull-out small group counseling
- [ ] School wide climate (pos. school/spirit com.)
- [ ] Individual counseling with students
- [ ] Consultation
- [ ] Building bridges to the community
- [ ] Other(s):

- [ ] Referrals to outside resources
- [ ] Student advisory team (BEST)
- [ ] IEP/504 eligibility paperwork
- [ ] Parent support groups/activities
- [ ] Classroom observations
- [ ] Duty

How can I best support your individual class or students?
(what topics would you like me to cover, more/less groups, etc.)

In your opinion, what is the ideal classroom curriculum/small-group counseling schedule?
(A/B weeks, every week, year long, half of the year, etc.)

Briefly describe what you feel the role of the school counselor should be:
Greetings all: I have a question based both on curiosity, and to receive information for a project I am working on to finish graduate school. I will not use names in the document I am writing, just the information you provide me. In trying to develop a mission statement and program philosophy for my school counseling and guidance program, I am attempting to incorporate national and state standards, as well as district and school characteristics. Please send me your responses to the following two questions by this Friday. Thank you!

Abby

1. What are the major components of your counseling program? (classroom curriculum, small groups, individual counseling, other duties).

2. How do you allocate your time during the week, months, and school year between these components? (A/B weeks, every week, first half of the year/second half of the year, etc.).
### Table 1
EES Staff Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total possible respondents</th>
<th>Actual respondents</th>
<th>Percent responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>73.1%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2
Elementary School Counselor E-mail Survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Possible Respondents</th>
<th>Actual Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Elementary School Counselors</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling curriculum in the classroom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull-out small group counseling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School wide climate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual counseling with students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building bridges to the community</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to outside resources</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student advisory team (BEST)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP/504 eligibility paperwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent support groups/activities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Staff Survey written responses:

1. How can I best support your individual class or students? (what topics would you like me to cover, more/less groups, etc.
2. In your opinion, what is the ideal classroom curriculum/small-group counseling schedule? (A/ weeks, every week, year long, half of the year, etc.)
3. Briefly describe what you feel the role of the school counselor should be:

Respondent 1:
• You’re already doing it!
• I like what we’re doing currently

Respondent 2:
• I do need to have small-groups once we have offered them to families
• 20-25 minute sessions, every week, time slot is the same! 1/month—whole class, 3/month, pull-out for small group activities.
• Support for the classroom teacher. Pull-out, parent support, teacher observation/ideas.

Respondent 3:
• I like the Second Step program. I also appreciate your feedback at BEST team. It is very helpful when you step in with a child who had escalated and provide the teacher relief.
• Classroom schedule—A/B all year. Small group—6 week sessions, 1/week.
• Individual—as needed for crisis or refer to outside agency.
• I feel the primary role is to be a support to students, teachers, parents, and principal. (Is that all?) p.s. you’re doing a great job!

Respondent 5:
• In the fall please have a small group counseling form available to share with parents at October conferences. Then the teacher can share this form and be proactive in getting this foundation of help started. I also like Kelso’s Wheel and we need to continue to help everyone (teacher’s and support staff) to use the same school language. This is imperative in continuing our class act program. We were using the Ladder of Success language throughout the whole school. I still use it along with the school rules.
• Being visible to the students so the children know you as someone to talk to. Talk to the teacher if you communicate with parents, so we know what’s happening.

Respondent 6:
• I feel every week, year long has the greatest effect on proactively setting standards, teaching school-wide expectations with all children. Consistently getting the same words and messages.
• Serve children first as whole group, followed by individual student academic/behavioral support to staff and parents.
Respondent 7:
• I would like to have an allotted time each week (one hour) for both in class instruction and out of class groups. For example, every Thursday from 10-11 is my time. 10-10:30 would be whole group instruction, 10:30-11 would be for small group/individual counseling needs. Rather than group according to specific need (divorce, friends, etc.), you could group according to class.

Respondent 8:
• Problems I see from year to year are tattling, spreading rumors (somebody likes somebody else type of things), and unkind remarks. Things always seem to escalate in the spring.
• I would like every week. One week could be Second Step and the next week could deal with other, more isolated topics on kindness, tolerance, and all those other subjects we were targeting each month. I realize Second Step does cover some of this.
• Supportive and informational—sometimes I feel topics are whole class issues and need to be discussed (like in a class meeting setting). Other times I feel as a teacher I need lots of support to deal with “high needs” students. Picking your brain for ideas, getting advice, or an “atta boy” from you all help to deal with hard situations or days.

Respondent 9:
• Bullying, respect, name calling, intentionally hurting feelings.
• Year long, every week—for continuity. Although if this is not possible with your schedule, A/B is second best.
• Supportive, rapport with students—being available when the need is there. A source of info—being able to help get the needed assistance.

Respondent 10:
• Continue to provide classroom support as well as small groups.
• Every week so there is consistency
• Working with troubled students and family. Classroom counseling as well as small groups. Coordinating testing.

Respondent 11:
• By making connections with students and the class as a whole. Dealing with issues as they come up.
• Every week, year long.
• A positive support person for students.

Respondent 12:
• Acceptance of others and working through family issues.
• Guide students with personal problems and issues that come up.

Respondent 13:
• Help and guide students with interpersonal and emotional issues.

Respondent 14:
• Communicate with students needing someone to talk to. Talk to teacher about ways they can help troubled kids.
• Every week—keeping consistency
• Working with troubled students and families. Support and communicate issues with teachers, so they can be sensitive to issues. Connect with kids personally when teachers don’t have time to.

Respondent 16:
• It would be helpful if you had an awareness of cultural differences in opinions, awareness, and feelings about “counseling.”
• Guide and counsel students.

Respondent 17:
• Your work with students is imperative: individual and small group, also with whole class, you have the advantage of speaking to large groups at a time. I.e. crisis intervention.
• I can not speak to classroom needs for curriculum. Grade level teachers know best what their classroom climate needs. Each year seems to bring a new “group need” per classroom.
• Social and emotional stand out for school support—principal/behavior, teachers/academics. Social adjustment, team building, building empathy for each other, you have the power. You can be the heart of the school and the rock of stability too!

Respondent 18:
• Emotional and “practice” support for kids and families. Supporting teachers with difficult students—finding teachers with difficult students—finding solutions. Helping establish life skills for all kids.

Respondent 19:
• To counsel the kiddos who need the extra support and attention (there are a lot of them!) whether one-on-one (most needy), or small groups. Also, whole class “meetings” about community/safety, etc. (Less paperwork for you and more kid contact!) You’re doing a great job!!

**Elementary Counselor E-mail Survey written responses:**

2. **What are the major components of your counseling program? (classroom curriculum, small groups, individual counseling, other duties).**

3. **How do you allocate your time during the week, months, and school year between these components? (A/B weeks, every week, first half of the year/second half of the year, etc.).**
Counselor #1:

I do classrooms until March break. I do all classes every week. I see individuals also. After break, I do small groups, individuals, and contracts with kids.

Counselor #2
I divide the classrooms up over the length of the school year into 4 quarters. So each classroom is assigned to one quarter. I go to classrooms 2x a week (usually works out to be about 12-14 classroom sessions). Intermingled throughout the year, I also have groups and individual counseling.

Counselor #3
Mine may look a little different since I’m _ counselor, and _ (school) psychologist. In the fall I did Second Step in ALL classes every other week on an A/B week schedule. Since Christmas, I’ve passed that duty onto teachers and replaced the time slots with more groups. I’m seeing 11 groups of 12 kids individually, not including drop-ins and the occasional (daily) crisis that comes up. My Monday’s and Tuesday’s are devoted to the psych. Assessments for our SpEd kids (including 4 SLP-A classes), so my week gets pretty busy!

I’ve learned from this year (my first) that it’s important to be seen in all of the classes so they know who I am and trust me enough to come to me when they have a problem. I’ve also learned that doing ALL of the classes can be a little overwhelming. One of the other counselors does a few grades at a time (e.g. K/1 for a few months, 2/3 for the next, etc.) and I REALLY like that idea.

Counselor #4
I start out the year with counseling curriculum—either ever class ever week, or A/B weeks. Then after Winter Break, I begin adding small groups, and exiting classrooms. Some classroom teachers continue doing counseling curriculum in their class (like Second Step) after I’m done. I do small groups the rest of the year, and of course see individual kids as needs arise.
Appendix E

Mission Statement

The mission of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program at EES is to maximize growth potential as students Lean to Learn (academic development), Learn to Work (career development), Lean to Live (personal/social development), and Learn to Contribute (community involvement), while preparing to become fully functioning and contributing members of society. Additionally, the program strives to help support the best possible teaching and learning environment for all members of the school community including students, teachers, staff, and parents.

Program Philosophy

The comprehensive counseling and guidance program at EES is accountable to national and state standards, district expectations, and school culture. The program is proactive, preventative, and collaboration focused, and should always be mindful of best practice for the school community. The counseling program will be culturally, and developmentally sensitive, demanding equity for all the students, staff, and parents that it reaches.
References


