

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROGRAM

Background

A comprehensive school guidance, counselling and career program is centered on helping all students meet their growth and developmental needs (educational, personal/social/spiritual and career). This program also will develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to prepare students for life-long learning, as reflected by the Student Learning Outcomes stated in the Government of Alberta's Three Year Plan for Education (1999). Delivery of this program is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary task. For this program to succeed, a close, collaborative partnership among the school, home and community is necessary as described in the manual, *From Position to Program: Building a Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Program*. The four components of the comprehensive approach are:

- Developmental guidance instruction.
- Individual student planning.
- Responsive services.
- School/community support.

Alberta's Commission on Learning (2003) *Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds* recommended that schools and school jurisdictions (#18) "ensure that all students have access to adequate counselling, diagnostic, and other support services necessary for them to succeed". The Commission felt strongly that all students should have access to both career, and personal counselling.

The Services for Students and Children Policy in the Guide to Education states that "school authorities will work together with members of the community to meet the needs of students and children who are "at risk" or who have special needs".

The Division will continue to implement comprehensive school Guidance and Counselling Programs in all schools. This is a desired result in the Annual Education Report related to Provincial Goal 3: "Students will be prepared for lifelong learning, the world of work, and citizenship."

Comprehensive school guidance and counselling programs and services will be made available to all students as an integral part of the school program in order to in order to facilitate their growth and development.

Procedures

1. The primary purpose of guidance and counselling programs and services is to facilitate the growth and development of student needs in three (3) key areas: personal/social/spiritual, educational and career planning.

2. All students in kindergarten through grade 12 will have access to programs and services in guidance, counselling and career areas.
3. The Superintendent will designate responsibility for the implementation; monitoring and evaluation of the comprehensive school guidance and counselling program to the Assistant Superintendent.
4. A collaborative approach coordinated by professionally trained school counsellors and involving teachers and community services and supports will deliver the programs and services.
5. A Counselling Program Plan (CPP) shall be developed for each school outlining the programs and services for the school year based on identified needs. These will be reviewed, updated and evaluated annually. The CPP will be based upon the provincial program and support the school's Crisis Response Plan.
6. Comprehensive guidance, counselling and career programs and services shall include the following components:
 - 6.1 Developmental Guidance Instruction is a preventive proactive activity. By providing students with relevant information and skills, in small groups and in classes, school staff members can help students understand themselves, and staff can actively facilitate their development in all areas educational, personal/social/spiritual, career, moral-ethical and esthetic;
 - 6.2 Individual Student Planning focuses on career planning as well as individual assessment and advisement;
 - 6.3 Responsive Services are the activities that meet students' immediate needs and concerns. These activities include consultation, personal counselling, crisis counselling and referral/coordination; and
 - 6.4 School/Community Support involves management activities that establish, maintain and enhance the comprehensive nature of the program. These activities include assessment of student needs, professional development and consultation with Division staff, parents, and community agency personnel.
7. School-based guidance and counselling programs and services will be developed, monitored and evaluated on an annual basis.
8. An annual Division budget allocation will be prepared to support the counselling staff necessary to deliver the program in schools and to maintain the Division's counsellor-to-student ratio.
9. Counselling staff will have appropriate graduate training in school counselling and have a role specifically defined by each school's Counselling Program Plan that includes duties in each of the four main program components:
 - 9.1 Developmental guidance instruction,
 - 9.2 Responsive services,
 - 9.3 Individual student planning, and

9.4 School community support.

10. The school counsellor will have a non-administrative assignment that may include either school counselling and teaching or school counselling and the Student Services Facilitator role.
11. Records created as a result of the guidance, counselling and career programs will be consistent with current and relevant legislation, policies and regulations.
12. School counsellors and others providing programs and services in schools shall respect the confidentiality of information received in accordance with professional ethics and relevant legislation.

Reference: Section 20, 39, 45, 60, 61, 113 School Act
Freedom of Information and Personal Privacy Act
Personal Information Protection Act
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services, 1997