

State “Guidance and Counseling” Requirements

Overview

Known as Standard (e), administrative rule PI 8.01(2)(e) requires that school districts plan and implement a program to provide “guidance and counseling” services to all pupils enrolled in the district. The program shall be planned and implemented to meet age and grade level appropriate personal, social, emotional, educational, and career/vocational child development and learning needs. Consistent with the school districts’ goals for education, the program will foster lifelong attitudes toward learning and career/employment goals as well as positive attitude toward self, family, and society.

Research on school and life success clearly demonstrates that quality elementary and secondary “guidance and counseling” programs which address personal, social, emotional, learning, and career/vocational needs enables parents and students to better cope with the many challenges and opportunities occurring during the school-age years. Comprehensive counseling services include instruction, individual counseling, and group interactions for students; as well as a variety of other activities for students, staff, parents, and community members. Other pupil services staff, parents, and community human services resources must be part of the total program to ensure that all students are assisted and supported as they grow and mature.

DPI staff assist districts in the design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement of “guidance and counseling” programs. Ongoing DPI collaboration with university school counselor preparation programs in Wisconsin ensure quality control in the preparation and continuing education of school counselors. Federal aid and grants administered by DPI enable school districts and CESAs to develop, expand, and improve career/vocational/ employment guidance programs. The department uses multiple formats to provide school districts with materials to use to develop and maintain quality comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs. The department also works closely with the Wisconsin School Counselor Association (WSCA) and other pupil services professional organizations to better coordinate services to children and families.

Administrative Rule

PI 8.01(2)(e). Each school district board shall provide a program of guidance and counseling services for all pupils, which meets all of the following requirements:

1. The school district shall maintain a school board approved plan for the provision of a program of guidance and counseling services.
2. The program shall be developmentally based and available to every pupil in every grade of the school district.
3. The program shall be:
 - a. Systematically planned by licensed school counselors in collaboration with other licensed pupil services staff, teachers, parents and community health and human service professionals.
 - b. Provided by licensed school counselors in collaboration with other licensed pupil services staff, teachers, parents and community health and human service professionals.

4. The program shall provide developmentally appropriate educational, vocational, career, personal and social information to assist pupils in problem solving and in making decisions.
5. The program shall include pupil appraisal, post-secondary planning, referral, research, and pupil follow-up activities.

Questions and Answers

1. Must “guidance and counseling” services be provided for every student in the district?

Yes, each pupil in the school district must have an opportunity to be equally served in a planned, written, and sequential program of school “guidance and counseling” services. This requirement is designed to ensure that developmentally appropriate “guidance and counseling” services are provided at both the elementary and secondary levels. School districts are expected to develop services for all students K-12 and staff them appropriately and fully.

2. Must there be a written “guidance and counseling” plan for the district?

Yes, the district shall have written evidence that its “guidance and counseling” program is developmentally based, systematically planned, and provided by DPI-licensed school counselors in collaboration with appropriate school personnel. The plan should provide evidence that the “guidance and counseling” program is sequential and articulated across all grades. It is also recommended that the plan include long- and short-range goals and objectives based on the developmental needs of children and adolescents. The program is expected to be organized in a manner that maximizes the services provided by a school counselor and integrates the resources available through other pupil services staff, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. The program should address the learning, personal, social, emotional, and career/vocational developmental needs of students and should be subject to continuous, systematic evaluation and revision.

3. Must DPI-licensed school counselors be employed by the district to carry out “guidance and counseling” services?

Yes, the district shall have written evidence that its “guidance and counseling” program is planned and provided by DPI-licensed school counselors in collaboration with appropriate school personnel. Individuals possessing the DPI school counseling license have the preparation necessary to provide the planning, design, and delivery of specific personal/social, educational, and career/vocational counseling and guidance services. DPI- licensed counselors should be acknowledged as core planners and primary providers of the counseling program, but they cannot have exclusive responsibility or obligation to either plan or deliver the district’s total guidance and counseling program. Beyond none, there is no minimum amount of required time that guidance and counseling personnel should spend in a particular school building nor is there a required counselor/pupil ratio.

4. Do specific counselor/pupil ratios exist that must be observed by the district?

No. Assignment of school counselors to school buildings and counselor/pupil ratios are at the discretion of the school district in accord with the district's "guidance and counseling" program implementation plan. Suggested counselor/pupil ratios based on national research studies are published in the American School Counselor Association's National Model. The district has the responsibility to assign other pupil services professionals and staff to fully implement the district's guidance and other programs as children's needs dictate.

5. What is the meaning of "in collaboration with?"

"In collaboration with" means the representatives of all providers of the district's "guidance and counseling" program be included in the planning and delivery of services to achieve the statutory requirement for the district's program. A developmentally based "guidance and counseling" program establishes the foundation for broad range pupil services delivery. The department recognizes that licensed school counselors must have key responsibilities for all "guidance and counseling" programs.

6. What constitutes a program of "guidance and counseling?"

A developmental counseling program is characterized by a specific plan, delivery system, and evaluation mechanism to determine effectiveness. It is recommended that the district's "guidance and counseling" program be consistent with the primary mission of the school; namely, school success and achievement for all pupils. The program should assist pupils with learning readiness, social and emotional development, school achievement, career/vocational/employability skill development, goal setting, decision making, and personal maturation. Such a program should be:

- K-12 in scope
- based on the educational, social/emotional, and career/vocational developmental needs of all pupils
- organized to provide a strong referral and networking system with a variety of "guidance and counseling" providers including other pupil services staff, teachers, parents, and community resources
- measured with specific, appropriate evaluation criteria
- designed with an intentional balance of intervention and prevention services
- managed and coordinated to be an integral part of the district's total educational program
- formed around a delivery system with school counselors at the core and other services integrated into a total pupil services program.

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