*Policy*

**SCHOOL COUNSELING**

*Code* **JLD** *Issued* **DRAFT/19**

A comprehensive developmental school counseling program, which provides all students the opportunity for optimum development, is an essential component of the district’s educational program. The board is committed to ensuring a high-quality school counseling program that is comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, fosters academic achievement and personal growth, and is provided to all students in an equitable manner.

To ensure that a quality school counseling program is provided to all students, the district will establish a counseling program in each school based on the following beliefs:

* All students are unique and are to be treated with respect and dignity.
* Every student can achieve at high levels.
* Learning is a lifelong process.
* A positive self-concept leads to responsible and productive citizenship, and fostering that positive self-concept is the responsibility of the school, home, and community.
* The school counseling program serves as a critical link to the instructional program and should provide students support and assistance in educational development, personal/social development, and career development.

The school counseling department, working closely with the administration and instructional staff, will accomplish the following:

* Analyze and evaluate students’ abilities, interests, skills, and achievements to assist students in making individualized educational, academic, and career-oriented choices; in setting career goals; and in developing individual graduation plans (IGPs) to achieve these goals
* Help students adjust to new in-school and out-of-school situations through counseling and support and/or referral to outside agencies
* Assist teachers, staff, and parents/legal guardians in understanding the needs and problems of individuals and groups of students
* Explain cognitive, aptitude, and achievement test data to students and parents/legal guardians
* Utilize student records, including grades earned, test data, personal data, and career development records to guide instruction
* Ensure student records are maintained in accordance with state and federal regulations

**Career Counseling**

The district will make available to all students a comprehensive system of academic counseling and career development that includes career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation.

*Elementary school*

The district will lay the foundation for the clusters of study system by providing career awareness activities for students in pre-K through fifth grade.

*Middle school*

Counseling and career exploration programs on the clusters of study system will be implemented by the district and made available to all sixth through eighth grade students.

The process of creating and updating developmentally appropriate career plans will begin with students in grade six and directly involve the parent/legal guardian as well as the student.

Before the end of the second semester of the eighth grade, students will select a preferred cluster of study and begin to develop an IGP in consultation with their parents/legal guardians. The IGP is a student specific educational plan detailing the courses necessary for a student to prepare for graduation and to successfully transition into the workforce or postsecondary education. The IGP will meet specific requirements as outlined by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and will be signed by a certified school counselor. The IGP will be reviewed and revised at least annually with the assistance of parents/legal guardians, teachers, and counselors.

*High school*

Certified school counselors, as well as career specialists under the supervision of these counselors, will advise students during the ninth and 10th grades on further defining their career cluster goals and further refining their IGPs.

Students in their 10th grade year will declare an area of academic focus, known as a career major, within a cluster of study before the end of the second semester.

Work exploration counseling activities and career awareness programs that combine counseling on career options and experiential learning with academic planning will be provided to assist students in fulfilling the IGPs. Work exploration activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* traditional mentoring experiences
* community and short-term shadowing experiences
* service learning experiences
* school-based activities providing opportunities to explore basic business practices and entrepreneurial enterprises
* internships and cooperative education experiences
* youth apprenticeships for students 16 years and older
* extended learning opportunities to include senior-year projects or community involvement or leadership

The district will implement the career counseling program model developed by the SCDE or submit a prototype to the department for approval.

The district will promote increased awareness and career counseling by encouraging students to utilize career counseling technology and by providing access to the South Carolina Occupational Information System (SCOIS) or to another computer-assisted career information system that has been approved by the SCDE.

The district will provide students in middle and high school with the services of a qualified and appropriately trained career specialist as outlined in law. Each middle and high school will have a student-to-school counseling personnel ratio of 300:1. Counseling personnel will include certified school counselors and career specialists.

Counseling services are available for every student in the district’s schools as required by state law and State Board of Education regulations. All students will participate in career development activities regardless of their race, religion, sex, color, disability, national origin, immigrant status, English-speaking status, or any other applicable status protected by law.

Materials or tests used for appraising or counseling students will not be different for students on the basis of their gender. The use of materials will not require different treatment of students on such basis unless different materials cover the same occupations and interest areas and the use of different materials is shown to be essential to eliminate gender bias.

Cf. IG, IGCA, IHAK, IHAQ, IHBC, IHCA, IKF, KB

Adopted ^

Legal References:

1. United States Code of Laws, as amended:
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C.A. Section 701, *et seq*.
3. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C.A. 12132.
4. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C.A. Section 2000c, *et seq*.
5. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C.A. Section 2000d, *et seq*.
6. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C.A. Section 1681, *et seq*.
7. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:
8. Section 59-1-435 - Religious Viewpoints Antidiscrimination Act.
9. Section 59-59-10*, et seq.* - South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act.
10. Section 59-63-40 - Discrimination on account of race, creed, color, or national origin prohibited.
11. S.C. State Board of Education Regulations:
    1. R43-205 - Administrative and professional personnel qualifications, duties, and workloads.
    2. R43-232 - Defined program grades 6-8.
    3. R43-234 - Defined program grades 9-12 and graduation requirements.
12. Other:
13. South Carolina Department of Education, *The South Carolina Comprehensive School Counseling & Career Guidance Model* (October 2018).