

HILLSDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HILLSDALE, NEW JERSEY

**MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELING**

GRADES FIVE & SIX

- 2009 -

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- **PURPOSE** -

The Hillsdale Board of Education desires to provide middle school age children with GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES which promote healthy coping and decision making skills.

Consistent with the philosophy of education, middle school guidance and counseling concerns itself with the child in the developmental process, maximizing student potential. Living and functioning effectively depends on the interaction of an individual's self-concept and the complexity of influences and experiences which children accumulate. The middle school teacher works within the education framework and the child's total environment to enable each child to find his/her identity and to learn to make choices and decisions which lead to effective functioning as a worthwhile being.

Individual students make choices and decisions which determine one's behavior and learning; thus particular attention and time must be given in the entire educational program of children to provide training and opportunities to learn decision making skills. Middle school teachers, because of their specialized training, can provide services and leadership in this area, as it is fully integrated into the total school experience.

Middle school guidance and counseling, provided by the guidance counselor and classroom and special area teachers, builds upon the belief that human beings must have continuous experiences which are challenging, achievement-oriented, and successful. The school creates situations in which pupils find themselves needed and wanted by others. It creates situations in which teachers can show each child that he/she is accepted by his/her classmates and by the teacher. School guidance and counseling is concerned with each child's perceptions of the present and how they relate to the present and future; the teacher plays the primary role in working with children and making education more meaningful to each child with the implementation of an appropriate program. The guidance counselor provides a stimulus and a support system for the student as he/she explores

and develops an understanding of relationships with their peers, with their instructors, with themselves, and with the world around them.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING as part of the school program enables students to understand themselves, understand their relationships with others, and acquire the ability to make decisions that lead to productive and enriched lives.

Guidance preparation must begin at an early age. Children need to be taught how to make decisions, consider alternatives, accept consequences of their behavior, and become aware of personal strengths and weaknesses.

- OBJECTIVES -

The individual student (age appropriate)

- should be able to identify likes, dislikes, interests, skills, etc.
- should be able to define one's role in the family setting, neighborhood, community
- should have positive feelings and be able to verbalize self-feelings in a straight-forward, comfortable manner without fear of non-acceptance
- should be able to recognize shortcomings and accept limitations, and then proceed to work toward improvement
- should be acceptant of others and be able to identify and work toward solving conflicts in relationships
- should feel good about learning and working; and when problems occur, should use appropriate skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills to reach a level at which one can cope.
- should have a realistic understanding of the inter-relatedness of people and the world of things and services, and the part one plays in it.

THE ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS in the child's life:

- should understand and accept the child's self-concept and work with each of them to determine for himself/herself positive changes, providing guidance and support.
- should relate to the child as a worthwhile human being so that the child can use acceptable and appropriate relationship behavior.
- should provide teaching, experiences, and opportunities for learning decision-making skills and learn from one's mistakes without criticism or ridicule, or without "taking over" the decision-making.

- PROCEDURES -

Teaching staff should be guided by the following activities and techniques as well as the concepts embracing the teacher as counselor. Teachers should make referrals to the Guidance Counselor as often and whenever necessary.

Counselors should:

- assess individual needs
- identify pupils who need special help – those who
 - a. are intellectually talented
 - b. have emotional difficulties
 - c. need supplementary instruction
- counsel students about personal and educational matters
- interpret cumulative data
- make referrals
- orient new students
- hold individual conferences with parents about child's progress and plans
- interpret pupil data
- interpret school services available
- inform parents about information concerning child development
- assist the building principal in developing 504 plans and providing individual accommodation plans for eligible students
- facilitate the I&RS Committee meetings/interventions and formulate student plans
- coordinate Basic Skills Program

Administrators should:

- discuss pupil program changes.
- assist in the maintenance and use of cumulative records.
- assist in class and group placement of pupils.
- assist with screening of students with special needs not being met by the present program
- study and report factors that might lead to improvement of teaching methods and curriculum.
- assist in the promotion of good public relations.

- TEACHER AS A COUNSELOR -

Counseling is a person-to-person situation in which the focus is on enabling the children who are being counseled to work through problems towards solutions and in which opportunities are provided to reorient views of self and community. While different schools of thought may place differing emphasis upon the activities and roles of the counselor, all agree that the purpose is to enable individual students to “understand themselves to that they can solve their own problems” and that, in the process, they are aided to a self-determined resolution of their problem.

Thus, the emphasis in counseling is on assisting the individual to modify behavior to solve problems through the establishment of an interpersonal relationship.

Teachers have had training in the field of human development and are placed in many situations which fit the definition of a counseling situation.

Teachers serve as front-line counselors. The reality factors of school life require them to know and understand the counseling process and how they can function effectively in helping individuals through counseling intervention.

- COUNSELING TECHNIQUES -

Individual Counseling

Individual counseling is the process of establishing with a child a relationship which enables him/her to learn about one's self, to set goals, and to develop self-direction in moving toward these goals:

Counseling with individual pupils may concern issues:

- about student's inability to master subject matters
- about student's inability to get along with peers
- about behavior problems in the classroom
- about family problems with parent and/or siblings
- about maturation
- about simple emotional problems
- about orientation of new pupils

Small Group Classroom Counseling

Small group counseling is the process of establishing relationships with a small group of children enabling them to communicate certain identified needs with the group leader. This technique provides a major learning experience in human relations and could appropriately be applied in situations regarding:

- grief counseling
- antisocial behavior-fighting, lying, etc.
- poor study habits
- inadequate health practices
- lack of social skills
- understanding of common emotions-fear, hate, etc.
- antiviolenace and bullying classroom presentations

Large Group Counseling

Large group counseling may be applicable in areas that assist units for classroom use and introduce programs and units of study in social studies, science, and health curriculum areas. Large group counseling is also used to foster personal, social, and academic growth of every child. It is also used to develop respect and responsibility for oneself and others. Some of the areas that might be addressed in a large group counseling situation are:

- attitudes
- social relationships
- decision-making and problem solving
- study habits
- world of work/career education
- citizenship and character development
- conflict resolution
- appreciation of diversity and prejudice reduction

- EVALUATION -

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the program will be determined by:

- follow-up of student attitudes
- the opinion of the teacher/counselor – which took place during the process(es) and the teacher/counselor's estimate of the progress made toward goals.
- scrutiny of the verbal exchange during the process, interview, etc.
- observable behavior changes

