
BACKGROUND OF PROGRAMMING IN BHM SCHOOLS

Today's school counselors are vital members of the education team. They help all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development, ensuring today's students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow.

The BHM district employs seven full-time licensed school counselors. The elementary schools have no school counselors, the middle school has three, and the high school has four. Although the role of the counselors is slightly different based on the setting, counselors work with all students to meet their personal and academic needs. School counselors are assigned students by grade level at the middle school and alphabetically by last name at the high school. School counselors stay with their students for all years they are in each setting. The ratio of students to school counselors at BCMS is 440:1 and the same ratio at BHS is 475:1.

School counselors meet with students individually, in groups, and also provide classroom presentations. School counselors provide developmental guidance, support and solution-focused counseling. School counselors are not trained as therapists and cannot diagnose or provide long-term treatment of students. School counselors work with students in a confidential manner and are required to follow the laws of mandated reporting.

BHM school counselors find their time spent in a variety of ways. Student needs are identified and addressed through communication with teachers and administrators, through meetings that address behavioral and attendance concerns as well as groups that focus on academic struggles. Students often self-refer if they are in need of school counseling support. Parents and guardians will also communicate with school counseling staff when they have concerns regarding their students.

There are some responsibilities and duties that are similar between buildings, and others that are site-specific. At both the middle school and high school, counselors provide resources to students and families dependent on needs, coordinate academic interventions, consult with school staff regarding student needs, organize and proctor district and state testing, manage 504 Accommodation Plans, supervise the lunchroom, collaborate with community agencies and organizations, and write grants.

At BCMS, counselors also are responsible for daily instruction in the study skills course they teach. They serve on the Prime Time advising committee and support the WEB student mentoring program. School counselors manage the Reset Room, Backpack Program, and the BCMS Care Closet.

The responsibilities of school counselors at BHS include enrollment of new students, course registration for all students, implementation of Personal Learning Plans, tracking of graduation requirements and credit recovery enrollment. In addition, they provide oversight for international exchange students, concurrent enrollment (CIS) programming and implementation, scholarships, advisory resource and presentations, as well as BASE (Bison Academic Support and Enrichment) placements.

Through all of the varied responsibilities and tasks that our school counselors are asked to do, they are deeply committed to doing what's best for our students and truly value continuous improvement.

PROGRAM VISION STATEMENT

In partnership with families and communities, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose (BHM) school counselors support the growth of all students. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) provides standards articulated in the three domains of academic, career, and social/emotional development. Using the standards as a framework, BHM school counselors:

- build relationships through connection to students, staff and families
- empower students to become their best selves
- provide resources to students and families to meet individual needs
- support transitions to all post-secondary options, and
- develop students' skills that promote personal wellness through lifelong learning

PROGRAM STANDARDS

[American School Counseling Association \(ASCA\) Standards](#)

BHM school counselors follow the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) national standards, which are divided into the domains of academic, career, and social/emotional development. These standards are available for school counselors to guide what is needed for a successful school counseling program that ensures students are college and career ready. An example from each standard domain includes the following:

Academic Development:

A:A2.3 Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed

Career Development:

C:B1.1 Apply decision-making skills to career planning, course selection and career transition

Personal/Social Development:

PS:C1.10 Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict

BHM PROGRAM STRENGTHS

BHM school counselors strive to create meaningful and trusting relationships with all students. The best way to address the needs of our students, whether personal, social, or academic, is to be visible, knowledgeable, and authentic. Our program is focused on meeting students at their level of need, which

can range from severe crisis management and attaining basic needs to college entrance or scholarship opportunities. Building rapport with students and families allows BHM school counselors the ability to foster ongoing collaboration as we strive to create the best possible experience in our schools.

RATIONALE FOR NEED

Although we have many program strengths, there are recognized limitations that this proposal is hoping to address. This request for resources is made with a desire for equity, access, support, and program improvement. We want to ensure that our students have access to the information and resources that they need. It is important that they have access to college and career planning tools as well as resources that can support their individual needs. With a commitment to continuous improvement, we want to be able to collect and analyze data to inform decisions about our program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The BHM counselors are requesting an infusion of technology resources. Through the attainment of these resources, BHM counselors will provide opportunities for students to experience supported independence as they learn and apply new information throughout the academic, career, and social-emotional domains. Technology and accessories allow us to be mobile in our efforts to provide information and support to students, staff and families in a variety of settings including classrooms, assemblies, parent/teacher conferences, and professional development. BHM counselors will also be able to more fully assess strengths and needs of our overall school counseling program and student population.

At both buildings, the chromebooks that are being requested will be used to give students access to information and will support students with their varied needs (ranging from work completion in a middle school class to college, scholarship, and career exploration in high school). The requested iPads will be used to collect data for program improvement and will also provide coping strategy options for students. Many free applications for iPads allow learning and utilizing strategies such as deep breathing, calming sounds and music, creative art, and mindful visualization.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs included in this proposal include resources to support district programming. A detailed breakdown of requests can be found in the spreadsheet linked below.

[CAP Resource Spreadsheet](#)

SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

The district's Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) requires a comprehensive review of needs and educational research prior to making a recommendation in the Curriculum Adoption Proposal. Recently, BHM school counselors have completed the Reflect, Explore, and Research phases of our process.

EVALUATION

In a field where the majority of our data collected is qualitative, the addition of these resources would allow the BHM counselors to assess our program in a quantitative manner. An example of this could be the check-in, check-out of student services at the high school or the Reset Room usefulness at the middle school. In continuous analysis of this data, counselors will be able to better gauge student needs, program strengths and areas for improvement. This analysis also encourages counselors to create efficiency in our role based on our collected data, allowing us to better connect students with resources based on their needs.

NEXT STEPS

With board approval, the planning for purchasing of new resources will be put into place. Ordering of resources will take place after July 1, 2020 in preparation for implementation in the 2020-2021 school year.