



BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

## KELLER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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350 KELLER PARKWAY  
KELLER, TEXAS 76248  
PHONE: 817-744-1000  
FAX: 817-337-3261

### **5A. Report**

**TO: BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES**

**DATE: June 14, 2004**

**SUBJECT: GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING**

### **Guidance and Counseling**

The Keller ISD Counseling Department has experienced a year with many successes. District-wide, students are benefiting from the continuing efforts of our counselors to serve students with excellence. One of the major keys to quality program development is through retention of counselors, allowing for attention to program refinement and detail rather than to repeated trainings for new employees. The following data on counselor retention provides insight into these efforts:

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Number of counselors	29	34	37
Number returning	21	28	34
Retention Percentage	72%	82%	92%

With twenty-seven campuses in Keller ISD for the 2004-2005 school year, the challenge of maintaining cohesiveness within the counseling department is a major focus. Lead counselor positions are a communication and training step that have been put into place this year. Lead counselors have been named—one for elementary levels, one for middle school levels, and one for each high school. Their responsibilities include:

- Monthly meetings are held with the lead counselors to address issues of concern as well as to provide trainings by Central Administration personnel.
- Lead counselors serve as a vital communication link.
- Lead counselors train others within their realm of responsibility.
- Lead high school counselors provide documentation of campus meeting agendas with sign-in sheets for verification of attendance and training.
- Lead elementary and middle school counselors provide documentation through counselor responses to emails, minutes, and/or on-site trainings.

All Keller ISD counselors meet monthly to network, strategize, and build competencies that enhance their services to students and families. Such opportunities allow for the sharing of age-appropriate ideas for social-emotional concerns.

Additionally, on June 4, 2004, lead counselors met to plan professional development days for counselors, K-12, for the 2004-2005 school year. Counselors will work in feeder patterns to address vertical advisement issues in areas such as Academic Pathways, graduation plans, financial aid and Texas Scholars. This will permit students and families to experience a developmental approach to advisement in academic areas.

### **Parent Information Opportunities**

With the rapid growth of Keller ISD, communication with students and parents is vital. Campuses are making a concerted effort to inform parents through methods such as web sites, newsletters, brochures, parent information nights, AP fairs, and personal contacts. Secondary principals and counselor representatives are here to address their specific efforts should you have questions.

A few examples of informational materials that parents have received are the Parent Letter of Understanding for parents of students attempting Pre-AP and/or AP classes and the newsletter explaining Texas Scholar opportunities, the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP), and the change for fall, 2004, to a regional college night. These areas will continue to be a focus at both parent information nights and student conferences.

Parents of entering 9<sup>th</sup> graders were made aware of the elimination of "Senior-off" and weighted classes in the fall of 2007. Middle school counselors included this information in the registration information for parents this spring, and Nika Davis stressed the change in her Academic Pathways presentations to parent groups. This coming change will continue to be stated often through different communication venues.

### **Scholarships**

A survey has been conducted to review the reporting process for scholarship offers in surrounding districts. The survey is included for your review. The majority of directors/lead counselors who responded to the survey indicate that their districts/campuses 1) report all scholarship offers, 2) attempt to verify offers but accept self-reporting as the standard method for information gathering, and 3) report military scholarships although some report only ROTC and academies.

The following information is from data currently available:

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
FRHS		\$4,920,426	\$6,135,761	\$5,257,036
KHS		\$5,935,993	\$7,404,532	\$7,386,541
Total	\$6.5 Million	\$10,856,419	\$13,542,293	\$12,643,577

For the Class of 2004 from Keller High School, 159 (26.7%) students from a class of 587 received scholarship offers of \$7,386,541 of which \$3,858,812 was accepted.

For the Class of 2004 from Fossil Ridge High School, 192 (30.2%) students from a class of 636 received scholarship offers of \$5,257,036 of which \$2,910,628 was accepted.

Reports from each high school regarding scholarship offers are included for your review.

Preliminary data regarding further schooling of graduates was self-reported as follows:

	Fossil Ridge High School	Keller High School
4-year	66%	72%
2-year	24%	15%
Vocational	3%	1%
Military	2%	4%
Full time Employment	4%	4%
Other	1%	4%

### **Student Assistance Services**

For the 2003-2004 school year, responsibility for program delivery of safe and drug free schools initiatives was moved to the counseling department. While KISD counselors have always worked to address these concerns through a three-way component—prevention, intervention, and recovery support—additional efforts were made in addressing each of these areas.

Prevention programs currently used across the district are included in a matrix for your review. For 2003-2004, campuses took a site-based approach to Red Ribbon Week activities and planned according to the needs of their students. Events included special topic days as well as numerous assemblies and speakers. Throughout the year, teachers incorporated drug and violence education lessons in their classes. Emphasis on this message came from all educators. Character education on each campus also encompassed the qualities of wise choices and responsible behavior. Drug dogs continued to be used as a prevention technique for both safe and drug free school initiatives.

Parent awareness is key to prevention and intervention. Keller High School hosted a parent night on February 23, 2004, to educate parents and the community regarding substance abuse. Throughout the year, KISD counselors facilitated eleven sessions of Love and Logic to assist 285 parents with parenting skills. Additional sessions were provided by Lena Pope, Inc.

Trainings related to intervention were provided for counselor awareness in recognizing substance abuse concerns. On September 30, 2003, Melvin Bennett of Starlight Recovery Center in Kerrville, Texas, provided an excellent program for counselors highlighting the importance of intervention. On October 30-31, 2003, Texas A&M presented a one-day training for counselors and a two-day training for nurses to build awareness in recognizing drug related impairments. Additional counselors were trained in the use of the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) for intervention purposes and Lena Pope, Inc.

offered assistance with SASSI screenings as well. Counselors were provided with up-to-date referral contacts and encouraged to share new referral sources through networking.

Safe schools procedures were addressed on October 22, 2003, and November 5, 2003, with the Keller ISD flight teams, core teams, campus secretaries, and campus first phone responders. Training topics for the inservice were how to make effective 911 calls, how to respond to traumatized persons, how to deal with media, and how to utilize arriving crisis response teams. Each presenter spoke to the important intervention technique of diffusing a traumatic event.

A full-time counselor is now assigned to The Learning Center and will work with campus counselors for the successful return of students to their home campus. Counselor-to-student ratios continue to be addressed in staffing requests and are key to supporting students' recovery efforts.

### **Responsive Services**

Keller ISD counselors have done an exceptional job in assisting students and families with challenging circumstances. Counselors have worked late into the evening on difficult CPS related issues, shopped on Saturday to help a child buy a dress for her mother's funeral, worked with students affected by a parent's or sibling's illness, made countless calls to find the best referral source for a family's problem, and listened endlessly to the words of a worried parent. They responded twice this year to stabilize campuses affected by student deaths and received accolades for their actions on a campus where a student had been injured. I have included a parent letter for your review. Three of the Top 40 Seniors from the Class of 2004 selected their high school counselor as the most influential educator in their public school career.

It is with great pride that I work with this exceptional department and I thank the board for your continued support.

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Respectfully submitted,

Janie Casey  
Director of Guidance and Counseling