

COUNSELOR PROPOSAL

Students must be valued and heard. We need to know their story; they need to feel connected to someone. There has to be a relationship to help students achieve purpose in their lives.

PURPOSE

I am writing to propose the addition of a licensed school counselor to the Virginia School District. I know the question has been posed, "What do school counselors do?" The more important question is, "How are students different as a result of what counselors do?" Our district is in a unique position to answer by being proactive and responding to the challenges presented by today's diverse student population.

I. Statement of Concern

I can truthfully say that our current counselor/student ratio 1:715 is not adequate support for our student body.

- It is almost impossible to develop significant relationships with students on a consistent basis. A key factor in student achievement and a sense of belonging that all students seek.
- There are major differences between elementary, middle school and high school, differences that cause some students to get lost emotionally and to fail academically. The transition to junior high would be more seamless with adequate support.

II. Meeting the Challenge

Counselors are professional educators with a mental health perspective who understand and respond to the challenges our students face today. We do not work in isolation; rather we are integral to the total educational program. We provide proactive leadership that engages all stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to help students achieve success in school. This mission is accomplished through the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive school counseling program. The American School Counseling Association's National Model would be used as a framework.

III. Plan of Action

School Counselors Implement the Counseling Program by Providing:

- School Guidance Curriculum
- Academic skills support

- Organizational, study and test taking skills
- Education in understanding self and others
- Coping strategies
- Peer relationships and effective social skill
- Career awareness, exploration and planning substance abuse education
- Multicultural/diversity awareness
- Bullying/Cyber Bullying

School Counselors collaborate with:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Students
- Community Partners

IV. Evaluation

It would be ideal to use data to effect change within the school that would ensure every student receives the benefits of the school counseling program.

It is more likely that each program that is implemented through the counseling program is developed through our students' needs, achievements and/or related data.

Respectfully yours,

Paula K. Larson
Licensed School Counselor
Virginia High School

SCHOOL COUNSELOR JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE

School Guidance Counselor

TITLE OF IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR

High School Principal

QUALIFICATIONS

Hold a master's degree in school counseling from an accredited college or university
Meet the certification requirements for a licensed school counselor from the Minnesota Department of Education

JOB SUMMARY

Virginia Counselors provide necessary services to support the districts mission statement. Given our mission for all students to excel, counselors provide ongoing individual, group, career and/or consultation services to students, staff and parents. The school guidance counselor is responsible for the development, implementation, and coordination of the overall guidance program.

MAJOR JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Individual Counseling Services
 - a. Provide career information.
 - Develop, review and revise a career and educational plan for each student
 - b. Personal growth and development.
 - c. Seventh grade and new student orientation, intake interview and follow-up
 - d. Students with academic difficulties.
 - e. Test and school record evaluation and interpretation.
 - f. Crisis management.
 - g. Make appropriate referrals of students and parents to outside agencies and specialists when necessary.
2. Small Group Counseling
 - a. Self-awareness and self-concept development.
 - b. Interpersonal relationships.
 - Promote an understanding and appreciation for diverse populations
 - Promote positive communications skills
 - c. Conduct small group counseling sessions in response to identified needs within the school system.
3. Classroom/Group Guidance
 - a. Career awareness and providing of occupational information of particular interest to students.
 - Administer and interpret Explore Test (college and career prep)
 - Develop Career Portfolios
4. Student Records
 - a. Keeping current accurate records of student progress.

- b. Monitor and advise students and parents as to progress toward promotion.
- c. Coordinate meetings with students, parents and staff.
- d. Develop and maintain skills needed to utilize technology systems.

5. Professionalism

- a. Adhere to the ethical standards of state and national school counselor associations.
- b. Adhere to best practices prescribed by state and national school counselor associations.
- c. Demonstrate knowledge of local policies and state and federal laws.
- d. Demonstrate personal growth and professional development.