

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The district recognizes that guidance and counseling is an important part of the total program of instruction and should be provided in accordance with state laws and regulations, district policies and procedures, and available staff and program support.

The general goal of this program is to help students achieve the greatest personal value from their educational opportunities. Such a program should:

- A. provide staff with meaningful information which can be utilized to improve the educational services offered to individual students.
- B. provide students with planned opportunities to develop future career and educational plans.
- C. refer students with special needs to appropriate specialists and agencies.
- D. aid students in identifying options and making choices about their educational program.
- E. assist teachers and administrators in identifying the academic, social and emotional needs of students.
- F. provide for a follow-up of students who further their education and/or move into the world of work.
- G. solicit feedback from students, staff and parents for purposes of program improvement.

All staff shall encourage students to explore and develop their individual interests in career and vocational technical programs and employment opportunities without regard to sex including reasonable efforts encouraging students to consider and explore "nontraditional" occupations for men and women.

Because the entire staff, as well as the students, can benefit from and contribute toward the prevention of adolescent suicide, the board directs the superintendent to develop and implement a comprehensive suicide awareness and prevention program. The program that is developed should help the school staff to:

- A. understand the developmental stages of adolescence and the causes of suicide;
- B. recognize the early warning signs of suicide;
- C. learn how to help in a suicide crisis;
- D. identify community resources and procedures that can help a suicidal person;
- E. address the repercussions of such a tragedy.

In incidents of potential self-destructive behavior the student's parent(s) or guardian shall be notified immediately and their cooperation shall be sought for immediate intervention. If the parent or guardian is unwilling to cooperate, the school administration shall contact appropriate agencies to request intervention on the student's behalf. In cases of child abuse or neglect, school staff are required to contact child protective services.

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Staff members shall be made aware of their responsibilities in the event of a potential or imminent suicide incident. Staff are expected to follow the procedures as specified. Three steps are vital in a suicide prevention program:

1. ensuring the short-term physical safety of the student;
2. communicating with appropriate school personnel, parents/guardians and local support personnel and establishing an interim plan of action; and
3. referring to appropriate professional or agency and implementing a long-term plan of action.

The following procedures are intended to serve these purposes.

Potential Suicide - - No Physical Evidence

Any staff member who receives or discovers information about a potential suicide (notes, threats, conversations, etc.) will immediately notify the principal.

Suicidal Ideation (Verbal threat or communication of possible suicidal intent--Having thoughts of killing oneself).

- A. Any suggestion, demonstration or communication of an intention to commit suicide must be taken seriously.
- B. Such behavior shall be reported to the principal and counselor. They will evaluate the situation through contacts with the student, parents/guardians and other staff.
- C. The principal and counselor shall formulate a plan for monitoring the student's behavior, with advice from mental health professionals and the student's parents/guardians.
- D. Confidentiality is not applicable when the student threatens himself/herself (or others). In such circumstances no matter what guarantees of privacy have been given the student, the information must be discussed with the appropriate staff. Parents/guardians shall be notified. Referral to an outside agency or private professional shall be made in cooperation with the parents/guardians. If it is determined that the student is seriously in need of professional intervention and the parent/guardian refuses to cooperate, appropriate agencies shall be contacted by the school administration to intervene on the student's behalf.
- E. The school administration shall monitor the student's functioning in school until a positive adjustment is evident.

Physical Evidence of Attempted Suicide

Any staff member who discovers or is informed of physical evidence relating to an attempted suicide (drug overdose, self-mutilation, etc.), will take the student to the office and immediately inform the principal and leave the student in care of the office staff.

Actual Attempt of Suicide

The following actions shall be taken:

- A. Contact the medics if there is any questions that a life-threatening situation is involved.
- B. Assign a staff member to remain with the person at all times.
- C. Clear the area to minimize chaos and misunderstanding and to provide working room.
- D. Contact the parent/guardian and advise them of the situation and what actions are being taken.
- E. Notify the superintendent.
- F. Accompany the student to the medical center, if such action is necessary.
- G. Notify appropriate staff members for consultation during the crisis. Following the crisis, staff will:
 1. contact the parents/guardians for follow-up.
 2. contact other professionals involved in the case for educational planning and follow-up services.
- H. Readmit the student upon the recommendation of the student's mental health professional who will perform a psychological evaluation of the student. Homebound instruction may be used on an interim basis.

Actual Suicide

In the event of an actual suicide, the school must exercise care to avoid contagion and to help deal with the grieving, guilt and shock of students and staff. The superintendent shall be contacted immediately. The Sheriff Department must also be notified.

The superintendent's office will respond to all requests for information. Follow-up actions to be taken are as follows:

- A. Prior to the next day, the principal will assemble the faculty and provide accurate information and plans for the day.
- B. The superintendent and principal or other relevant staff will need to determine steps to take to deal with the current school situation and plan for and deal with problems which may arise.
- C. Students will meet in order to receive all the facts.
 1. They should be encouraged to discuss their shock, feelings of loss, good and bad memories of the person, and to participate in discussion of depression, death and suicide.
 2. Particular attention should be directed to students who had a close relationship to the victim.