

**A Model Comprehensive, Developmental
Guidance and Counseling Program**
for
Texas Public Schools

**A Guide for Program Development
Pre-K-12th Grade**
Revised 2004

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Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

Foreword

A Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools, A Guide for Program Development Pre-K -12th Grade has been developed to help ensure that all students in Texas might benefit from high quality comprehensive, developmental school guidance and counseling programs. The guide provides a model for such programs and a process for tailoring the model to meet the varying needs of students in a wide array of school districts.

The Guide has been written as a model for educators to develop, validate, or improve their school districts' guidance program. Counselors, principals, other district administrators, board of education members, teachers and parents are all recognized as active participants in this broad-based process for determining the guidance and counseling needs of all students and for planning how best to meet those needs.

School counselors have long been recognized and appreciated for their efforts in facilitating student learning. The guide provides needed flexibility in program implementation and enhances their efforts in contributing to increased student achievement and success.



Shirley J. Neeley, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education



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Texas Education Agency Staff

Shirley J. Neeley

Commissioner of Education

Robert Scott

Chief Deputy Commissioner

Susan Barnes

Associate Commissioner, Standards and Programs

Greg Travillion

Director, High School Completion and Student Support

John Lucas

Manager II, Guidance and Counseling

Virginia Rodriguez

Administrative Assistant III, Guidance and Counseling

A Student's Story. . .

I'm in seventh grade now, but I was once a boy who always made bad choices and always bullied kids around. My teachers would send me to the office to see the principal. While I was in first grade, I played soccer for our school. I was chosen by the counselor to be on this team. The reason she picked me was because she saw potential in me. I stayed on this team for four years until my 4th grade year. I became involved in other opportunities that my counselor thought would help me feel like I belonged.

If fifth grade, I went to Middle School. I met my former counselor. When I found out she was at my school, I was very happy because she was my favorite counselor. She always helped me through problems and tough times. She introduced me to the new counselor. She also signed me up for the mentor program. My mentor visited every Wednesday. We worked on homework, projects, worked on computers or just talked. Since my mentor was the Chief of Police, he would always tell me that if I continued behaving like I was, I would end up in jail. He also told me that if I carried weapons, I would get in trouble, have a police record and not be able to play sports. He would always ask me what it was that I wanted to do. I told him I was interested in sports. He helped me realize that I couldn't play sports if I kept acting up and didn't work on my grades. Having a mentor helped me realize that sometimes you can get good things out of life if you make the right decisions not the wrong ones like I had been doing. Right before the year was over, we met for the last time. He told me that we were going to go over my behavior records and try to see if I could do better next year in sixth grade. He also told me that he and his son were going to be in a contest. They had to canoe to the Gulf in the Texas Water Safari. About one week later, my counselor visited me at home and notified me that his canoe flipped in the rapids and he went under. His son made it to shore but he could not find his dad. They searched for him for 3 or 4 days. They finally found him tangled up in a bunch of seaweed. I could not believe this. I really did not want to believe this. I did not want to go back to school.

The next year, I tried my hardest not to get suspended or in as much trouble. I knew that my mentor would like for me to stay out of trouble. He would also want me to do better.

During sixth grade, my counselor worked with me on a behavior contract. This helped me stay out of trouble. My counselor would always check up on me. I liked knowing that she cared about me. My counselor would always help me with my problems. She was not only a counselor to me, she was a best friend. Someone I could sit down and talk to about things, laugh, and have fun with. It meant a lot to have someone outside my family who cared about me and who I could talk to about anything.

My Assistant Principal was sort of like a mentor during my sixth grade year. He kept me out of trouble by talking to me, expecting me to do better, and helping me to be a leader among my classmates.

I would like to be a mentor to someone someday and help them turn their lives around like the mentors and counselors have helped me. When I become a mentor, I will be able to repay what they did for me.

Having counselors and a mentor is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

A Parent's Story. . .

My children are 18 and 21 now and are in college. They are responsible and self-motivated people now, too. But there was a day that they were struggling along just to get out of bed and go to school everyday. However, all along this journey, they were privileged to have outstanding counselors. For you see, as a parent and former school teacher myself, I worked closely with them as my children grew up in the early years of the resource program and were diagnosed with attention deficit disorder in kindergarten.

I always loved to go into the children's elementary counselor's office. I so appreciated the space; it was filled with stuffed animals, bean bag chairs, jars filled with treats, artwork done by the students. One immediately had the feelings of warmth and trust.

Because of their needs, there was extensive record keeping and paperwork which may have at the time seemed cumbersome and redundant but later served to pave the way to access needed resources.

As they progressed through school and began high school, the counselor became the liaison for my child between me and the teacher.

My son's high school counselor was one of those very special people. He felt so close to her. She informed and assisted me in helping him in a way which probably would have never been possible had she not cared enough and been trained well enough to handle a situation in a very professional way. She was able to keep his trust while working with me. I will be forever grateful.

I have personally learned so much from my children's counselors. Because of their care and commitment, I feel like I made a difference in my children's educational lives. And, after all, isn't that the biggest purpose of education: to make a difference in a child's life? I know the premise for the needs counselors address nowadays is largely due to the breakup of the family and parents expect counselors and teachers to fill that void. Although one cannot take the place of the other, I do believe schools have a place of opportunity and are accountable in some respect to put the "heartbeat" of the family back into education through the counseling and guidance departments. This is more than a duty; it is a privilege requiring the gifts counselors hold to make a difference in a child's or family's life. As time goes by, I have even more respect and gratitude for the loving touch they placed on each of us in this family.

A Counselor's Story. . .

She was eight years old and in the 3rd grade when I met her. Rosie was transferring from another school where she had been seeing the counselor due to the fact that she was hearing impaired and didn't want to wear her hearing aids because she was afraid students would make fun of her. What I remember most about her was the way her eyes crinkled up when she smiled and the dimples on either side of her mouth.

When she was in the 4th grade her infant brother only days old died of a heart defect. When she was in the 5th her mother decided to move with her 3 daughters to Michigan so they could all work as migrant laborers as she had done when she was young. The move proved to be very traumatic for Rosie and she would write letters and call in tears telling me how she wanted to move back to Texas and how badly she missed her friends.

When she was thirteen I received a call from her mother telling me that Rosie was in the hospital and that she would speak to no one. She said that she would only speak to me. It was at that time that we discussed her future, goals, and dreams. She wanted to graduate from high school and become a writer. I told her to hang in there and that I would be at her high school graduation when the day came.

This summer my husband and I traveled to Michigan to see Rosie graduate. When we saw each other her eyes crinkled as we both laughed and cried at the same time. Her mother, sisters, and grandmother were all beaming. After the ceremony we went to her home and she showed me albums full of school pictures, certificates, awards and ribbons given to her in elementary school. I was struck by how very important these positive notes were and how they motivated her to strive on. Rosie said she's going to college and I believe her. She said she's going to write and I believe that also.

Rosie and her family thanked me for all I'd done for Rosie. Yet it was I who needed to thank Rosie for showing me that with love, support and determination a child can defy the odds and make their dreams become reality.

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