Seminar Final

Janet Vick

University of Georgia

Fall 2000

Dr. Stanizewski

If I were going into a school that had never had a School Counseling program I would start in the summer, interviewing teachers and administrators to try to get a pulse of the school, their attitudes and opinions on the school counselor's role, and the problems (developmental and problem-centered) facing the students in school. I would also hear and address any concerns they might have, and identify students, who, because of special circumstances, need extra help. I would also send out a needs assessment questionnaire to students and parents to get a better understanding of their concerns and gather any suggestions they might have in regards to topics of interest across the 3 National Standard strands of academic development, career development and personal/social development. I would then disaggregate the school data and look at different groups of students and the degree to which these groups are achieving success in school, to identify the needs of these specific populations. For example is the large Hispanic population underrepresented in gifted programming? What percentages of girls are in upper level math and science programming?

While compiling this data, I would also begin organizing a School Counseling Leadership Team, composed of teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, community members and if appropriate, students, who could help prioritize these needs and look at how they can best be matched with the developmental needs of the children, and ascertain whether or not these needs might be addresses in the regular program and where special counseling services might be added. I would share my data findings and discuss my vision to implement the National Standards-based school counseling program and educate them on why implementing a standards-based curriculum is so important. We could discuss how the data and needs we have gathered fit into these standards and collectively determine what needs we should address in the upcoming school year as well as short-term and long-term goals and outcomes. This committee could also help develop strategies and activities that would address these goals, enlist

teacher/community/ parent support and resources and aide in the data collection for goal evaluation. In this way we can begin to develop a program that is reflective of the needs of all stakeholders.

I would then begin to design a calendar, which lays out a time-line of who will do what, and when. This calendar would include all school-related functions to help ensure that school counseling activities, services and programs are balanced throughout the year and are coordinated with the school events and happenings. I would also begin working on my weekly and monthly scheduling plan based on our goals, which would include large group classroom guidance, small group guidance, individual counseling, peer facilitator programs, consultation and coordination. Since there is only so much time day, I would begin by scheduling my large classroom guidance for the year first, and then determine how many weeks my small groups will run and schedule those in as well. Once those are scheduled, I could begin tackling individual, consultation, and peer facilitator times, and most importantly, FLEXIBLE TIME in which I can use when issues and crisis ultimately surface and I need to shuffle in order to attend to the needs at hand, or schedule in an individual appointment for a student who needs to be seen that day, etc.

Finally, I would schedule a mid-semester checkpoint to get a feel of how the staff, administrators and parents feel the programming is going thus far and welcome comments and suggestions. The Leadership Team would also convene to evaluate our goals and outcomes and make adjustments where needed.   I would also have end of the year evaluation with both of these groups to track the program's progress, discuss our successes and areas of improvement, what worked and what didn't, and begin planning for program improvement for the upcoming year.