

Program Delivery

The Alabama guidance and counseling competencies are integrated throughout grades K-12 so that all students have multiple opportunities to gain mastery of each academic, career, and personal/social competency. The four components of the comprehensive program, guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support are integrated to ensure the achievement of each competency.

School Guidance Curriculum

In Cullman County, the School Guidance Curriculum component is implemented from Kindergarten through 12th grades, teaching such skills as decision-making, study skills, career planning, and personal safety. This component may be delivered by the counselor, teacher, or other staff member. Guidance, by definition, is “the help all students receive from parents, teachers, counselors, community members and others to assist with educational and career development” (Mills & Smith, 2013). As such, the competencies in the Alabama State Plan may be delivered by any faculty or community member, and may be coordinated by the school counselor.

Examples of guidance curriculum includes:

Classroom Guidance Activities These sessions may be led by the counselor or other staff member and take place in a whole group setting.

Group Activities. Small group sessions may be conducted outside of the regular classroom to address student needs or competency deficiencies.

Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development School counselors meet with interdisciplinary teams to develop curriculum that integrates content matter with school guidance competencies. Counselors may also assist with the delivery of these competencies.

Parent Workshops and Instruction Counselors conduct informational workshops for parents to address the needs of the school community, including but not limited to, college information, financial aid, academic planning, and the guidance and counseling curriculum.

According to the State Model (2003), topics for the School Guidance Curriculum may include:

Self-Concept

Communication Skills

Peer Relationships

Career Awareness & Career
Awareness

Study Skills

Choice-Making Skills

Substance Abuse Programs
Post-High School Planning

Personal Safety
Pre-Employment Skills

Cullman County counselors provide guidance curriculum lessons in study skills, drug awareness, careers, relationships, bullying, following directions, test-taking skills, and various topics based on student need.

Individual Student Planning

This guidance and counseling component encourages and teaches each student to plan and monitor their own academic, career, and personal/social development. This component focuses on test interpretation, career exploration, and post-secondary educational options.

Examples of individual student planning activities may include:

Individual or Small-Group Appraisal School counselors help students to interpret assessment results, work values, career interests, and job skills. Short and long-term plans are developed.

Individual or Small-Group Advisement According to the State Plan, “counselors help students acquire self-appraisal skills; personal and social development skills; and educational, career, and labor market information” (p. 7). Appropriate advisement requires the involvement of other individuals into this process, such as teachers and parents, to help students make good academic and career choices.

Placement and Follow-Up School counselors provide information to students and help them make transitions to appropriate resources or to the next educational or post-secondary level.

According to the State Model (2003), Individual Student Planning activities may include:

Career Awareness and Exploration	Four-Year Educational Plan
Career/Technical Education Programs	Honors and Awards Programs
Teacher Advisor Programs	Financial Aid/Scholarship Advisement
Career Shadowing	Role Playing
Post-Secondary Application Process	Student Portfolios

In addition, school counselors may also serve on special education referral committees, eligibility hearing teams, 504 or RtI committees, and EL committees.

Responsive Services

Responsive Services provided by counselors includes individual and group counseling which meets the needs of every student. This counseling is usually short-term in nature; and if needed, involves referrals to appropriate agencies for further services.

Examples of Responsive Services include:

Consultation Above all, school counselors are advocates for students. As such, counselors often consult with teachers, administrators, parents, other counselors, and outside agencies to provide appropriate services and to meet the needs of students and their families.

Personal/Crisis Counseling Personal counseling may take the form of individual or group counseling, involving such issues as grief, divorce, decision-making, relationships, or other tasks. Students learn coping skills as well as how to choose alternatives and make informed choices.

Peer Facilitation Students may be trained to provide services to peers in areas such as conflict resolution, academic tutoring, and mentoring.

Referrals Counselors know the limits to their services and expertise, so they have an extensive community resource list which may be used to make referrals for students and families. This list includes:

Cullman Area Mental Health
System-Wide Social Worker
Department of Human Resources
The Link
Programs
Victims Services

Cullman Caring for Kids
Vocational Rehabilitation
Juvenile Services
Employment and Training
Other Local Charities

System Support

The System Support component includes the indirect activities that help to maintain the comprehensive guidance and counseling program. These activities include various functions involving school and community relationships, diverse group memberships, student support teams, collaboration for guidance curriculum, and professional development.

Examples of activities in this component include:

Professional Development. As an integral part of their profession, school counselors continue to update their skills and expertise. Local professional learning is provided as well as the opportunity to attend state conferences. Post-graduate work is another option with which counselors may hone their professional skill set.

Counselors also provide the professional learning to their colleagues. As part of local school professional development, counselors share information related to data-analysis, guidance curriculum, individual planning, and how to identify suicidal ideation in students.

Collaboration and Community Outreach. Counselors solicit participation in the development of the Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Plan, communicate the plan/program to staff and community, partner with school and community resources to provide services to students, and meet regularly with school staff and other resources to gain feedback on student needs and the overall effectiveness of the program.

Guidance Advisory Committees Guidance Advisory Committees are developed at the system and school levels to promote collaboration and support for the guidance program as well as to communicate the program to school staff and to the community. These committees meet twice a year and include: students, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, board members, business and community members, and post-secondary representatives.

Curriculum Development and Program Management Counselors continue to review the guidance curriculum and planning along with the associated student data to make the needed revisions to ensure student success. Counselors and teachers (or other staff members) collaborate to ensure that student competencies are met.

Research and Evaluation Counselors conduct the necessary activities to fulfill Educator Effectiveness requirements. In addition, counselors evaluate the guidance, individual planning, and counseling services to determine their effectiveness. The counseling and guidance program is outcome-based.

Fair-Share Responsibilities Counselors participate in other “fair-share” duties that are comparable to other staff members. These duties, however, do not interfere with the delivery of services to students.