

Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program:

A Manual for Program Development, Implementation, Evaluation and Enhancement

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Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Dear School Counselor,

It is our pleasure to provide you with the new edition of the *Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program – A Manual for Program Development, Implementation, Evaluation and Enhancement*. This manual provides administrators and counselors with guidelines for implementation and accountability in order to deliver the best possible services to students, parents/guardians, and the community.

Effective school guidance and counseling programs impact nearly 500,000 Missouri students each year. Such vital services, an integral part of each school's educational program, must be designed to address the individual needs of students in their pursuit of successful school experiences.

Thank you for your professionalism and commitment to your students by ensuring their academic and societal success through comprehensive developmental guidance services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris L. Nicastro".

Chris L. Nicastro
Commissioner of Education

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PREFACE

The United States and the state of Missouri continue to undergo substantial changes industrially, occupationally, socially, and economically. These changes are creating challenges for students in Missouri. A rapidly changing work world and labor force; violence in homes, schools, and communities; technology; divorce; teenage suicide; substance abuse; and sexual experimentation are just a few examples of these challenges. These challenges are real, and they are having and will continue to have a significant impact on the personal/social, career, and academic development of students.

A Response

In response to these and other societal and individual challenges, the state of Missouri is continuing efforts that began in the 1980s to reform and improve education including guidance and counseling in schools. For guidance and counseling, the reform and improvement process has required a re-conceptualization of guidance and counseling from a position/services orientation to a comprehensive guidance and counseling program firmly grounded in principles of human growth and development – a program that is an integral part of the educational process with a content base (specific knowledge and skills) of its own. What began in the 1940s in Missouri as a position orientation with individuals filling positions and providing guidance and counseling and counseling services has now become a comprehensive program that is an equal partner with other programs in education.

Six Premises

The re-conceptualization of guidance and counseling that has occurred in Missouri and elsewhere across the country is based on three premises that underpin the organization and management of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in schools. These premises are as follows:

1. ***Guidance and counseling is a program.*** Its characteristics are similar to other programs in education and include the following:
 - Student grade level expectations (GLEs) (academic, career, and personal/social development)
 - Activities and processes to assist students in achieving these grade level expectations
 - Professionally certified personnel
 - Materials and resources
 - Program, personnel, and results evaluations
2. ***Guidance and counseling programs are developmental and comprehensive.*** They are developmental in that guidance and counseling activities are conducted on a regular, planned, and systematic basis to assist students to achieve guidance and counseling related grade level expectations. Although students' immediate and crisis needs must be met, a major focus of a developmental program is to provide all students with experiences to help them grow and develop. Guidance and counseling programs are comprehensive in that a full range of activities and services are provided such as



assessment, information, consultation, counseling, referral, placement, follow-up, and follow-through.

3. *Guidance and counseling programs assist all students to complete a college and ready curriculum to earn a diploma that ensures them of being prepared for multiple opportunities after high school.*
4. *Guidance and counseling programs feature a team approach.* A comprehensive, developmental program of guidance and counseling is based on the assumption that all school staff members are involved. At the same time, it is understood that professionally certified school counselors are central to the program. School counselors not only provide direct services to students but also work in consultative and collaborative relationships with other members of the guidance and counseling team, members of school staff, parents/guardians, and members of the community.
5. *Guidance and counseling programs are developed through a systematic process of planning, designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing.* This process assures intentional delivery of a program designed to address established priorities.
6. *Guidance and counseling programs have established leadership.* This ensures accountability for the program and for the quality of the performance of program staff.

Organization of the Manual

The manual is comprised of seven sections:

Section I

- The role of guidance and counseling in promoting excellence in education
- The origin of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program
- Purpose and Definition
- Benefits and positive aspects of fully implemented comprehensive guidance and counseling programs
- Demonstrated impact on students
- Resources available to local schools

Section II

- Description of the three major elements of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program: Content, Organization Framework, and Resources

Section III

- Putting the program into place
- Program evaluation
- Program enhancement

Section IV

- Involving others in program implementation

Section V

- Guidance and Counseling and Career Education

Section VI

- Guidance and Counseling and Special Education

Section VII

- Professional Development



Who Should Read This Manual?

A goal of this manual is to inform school counselors, administrators, and educational staff about and involve them in the development, implementation, management and evaluation of comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs that can be specifically tailored for their districts. It can and should be used in pre-service education as well as in-service education for administrators, school counselors, and other educational staff members.

Important Points to Remember

To understand the concept of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program so that this manual can be used most effectively, here are some important points to keep in mind:

- A comprehensive guidance and counseling program is a complete guidance and counseling program that provides the structure for all of the activities and services required to serve all students, parents/guardians, and the community.
- A comprehensive guidance and counseling program is not an add-on to be added on top of the rest of the duties for which school counselors are currently responsible. Instead, it is the guidance and counseling program, and it contains 100% of the activities and services that school counselors – working collaboratively with parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators – are responsible for providing to students, parents/guardians, and the community.
- This manual provides an overview of the basic elements of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program as defined by Standard 6.9 of the Missouri School Improvement Program and a discussion of selected topics that affect the full operation of the program. The task for personnel in a local school district is to put a fully functioning comprehensive guidance and counseling program into place at the district level that is tailored to the specific needs of that district using the organizational structure and transition ideas found in this manual. [Appendix D](#) provides school counselors with an MSIP Compliance Checklist to assist in the development of the manual as well as the Internal Improvement Review to assist in determining the overall degree of program implementation.
- The job of putting a comprehensive guidance and counseling program into place and making it fully operational for the local district is not a simple task requiring little staff time and few resources. Although substantial work can be done during the first several years of the program, typically 4 to 5 years may be required to ensure successful and full program implementation with the necessary resources available. The full support of district administrators and the board of education is essential.
- Once a program is in place and operational, continual enhancement through a comprehensive on-going evaluation process using relevant school/student data and other evaluative information is essential for sustainability and for maintaining its relevance to the over-all educational program.