Fort Payne Middle School

Comprehensive Counseling

and

Guidance Plan

Counselors:

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**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Fort Payne Middle School Counseling and Guidance Program is to assist all students in their quest to become productive and responsible citizens. FPMS counselors will assist and advocate for students to become lifelong learners through their personal, social, academic, and career development.

**Vision Statement**

The vision of the Fort Payne Middle School Counseling and Guidance Program involves a planned, purposeful, and sequential program of activities that begins in sixth grade and continues through the eighth grade. The program is to promote the mindsets and behaviors that encourage and enhance students’ development in order to become leaders in the community, productive citizens, successful members of their households, and workforce.

**Program Benefits**

The Fort Payne Middle School Counseling and Guidance Program will have a positive impact on all stakeholders, which include: students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, board of education, school counselors, mental health agencies, the communities, secondary education, and student services.

**Benefits for Students**

* Ensures every student access to the school counseling program
* Monitors and interprets data to facilitate student improvement and school success
* Provides strategies for closing the achievement gap
* Advocates for students and promotes equitable access to educational opportunities

**Benefits for Parents/Guardians**

* Supports active partnerships for student learning and career planning
* Invites and coordinates access to school and community resources
* Advocates for student academic, career, and personal development
* Provides training and informational workshops
* Provides data for information on student progress

**Benefits for Teachers**

* Promotes an interdisciplinary team approach to address student needs and educational goals
* Increases collaboration with school counselors and teachers
* Supports development of classroom management skills
* Analyzes data to improve school climate and student achievement

**Benefits for Administrators**

* Develops and implements a school counseling and guidance plan to promote student success
* Utilizes data for school improvement
* Uses data for implementation of the *Educate Alabama*
* Provides a proactive school guidance curriculum that addresses student needs and enhances school climate

**Benefits for Board of Education**

* Provides data that support the implementation of a standards-based school counseling and guidance program
* Ensures equity and access to a quality school counseling and guidance program for every student
* Articulates appropriate credentials and staffing ratios
* Informs the community about school counseling and guidance program success
* Provides data about improved student achievement

**Benefits for School Counselors**

* Defines responsibilities within the context of a school counseling and guidance program
* Eliminates non-school counseling program activities
* Supports access to every student
* Provides a tool for program management, implementation, and accountability
* Recognizes school counselors as leaders, advocates, and agents of change
* Ensures the school counseling and guidance program contributes to the school’s mission
* Provides evidence of ongoing activities for the implementation of the *EDUCATE Alabama*

**Benefits for Mental Health Agencies**

* Builds collaboration between mental health agencies and school
* Provide comprehensive supportive student services to all students who need mental health services.
* Bridge the gap between school, family, and community
* Provide appropriate recommendations to mental health agencies in a confidential manner

**Benefits for Communities**

* Builds collaboration with businesses and industries and enhances the potential for every student’s postsecondary success
* Provides a workforce with a stronger academic foundation
* Promotes equity and access to the workforce

**Benefits for Secondary Education**

* Enhances articulation and transition of the student to secondary grade levels
* Encourages and supports rigorous academic preparation that prepares every student for the most appropriate postsecondary educational opportunities
* Motivates every student to seek a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college
* Promotes equity and access to secondary education for every student

**Benefits for Student Services**

* Defines the school counseling and guidance program
* Maximizes collaborative teaming to ensure individual student success
* Uses school counseling and guidance program data to maximize benefits for individual student growth
* Increases collaboration for utilizing school and community resources

**Program Delivery Components**

Fort Payne Middle School’s comprehensive school counseling and guidance program must ensure that every student has multiple opportunities to acquire competencies in the three domains of Academic Development, Career Development, and Personal/Social Development. A combination of the four program delivery components (School Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support) should be utilized in assisting students to achieve these competencies. Examples of school guidance curriculum delivery options within this component may include, but are not restricted to:

**Classroom Guidance Activities:** Counselors facilitate, co-lead, or assist in the delivery of guidance curriculum activities. These activities may be conducted in the classroom, in the guidance office, or in other school facilities.

**Group Activities:** Counselors conduct small-group counseling sessions outside the classroom to respond to students’ identified interests or needs. Small-group counseling may be either immediate-response or long-term counseling.

**Individual Guidance Activities**: Counselors conduct individual guidance for students who are struggling with issues, such as: family, social, and academic difficulties. Individual guidance is based on the individual needs of students.

**Parental Involvement:** Counselors are available to meet with parents/guardians to address individual needs and answer questions.

Topics for school guidance curriculum activities within this component may include, but are not limited to:

* Substance Abuse Prevention Programs
* Career Awareness and Exploration (Alabama Career Planning Network)
* Child Abuse Prevention (Erin’s Law)
* Mental Health/ Suicide Prevention (Jason Flatt Act)
* Bully Prevention (Jamari T. Williams Anti-Bullying Act)
* Four Year Plans (Kuder)

**Individual Student Planning**

**Individual Student Planning:** includes counseling activities that provide every student with an opportunity to plan, monitor, and manage their academic, career, and personal/social development. Individual student planning may include referrals related to learning difficulties, child abuse, or behavior. The counselor in certain circumstances may begin the referral process to an outside agency. The counselor may consult and collaborate with administration, teachers, and parents to seek additional information to best meet the needs of the student. Counselors utilize appropriate assessment data as an important aspect of individual development of immediate and long-range plans.

**Individual or Small-Group Appraisal:** Counselors help assess students by serving in the following capacities: multidisciplinary committee member, an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) team member, LEA (Local Education Agency) representative, EL (English Learner) committee member, 504 services building coordinator, and RTI (Response to Intervention) committee member.

**Responsive Services**

Responsive services include counseling or referral activities that meet the immediate needs and concerns of students. Responsive services include personal counseling, crisis counseling, problem solving, agency referral, and consultation. Examples of responsive services delivery options within this component may include, but are not restricted to:

**Consultation:** Counselors serve as student advocates by consulting with students, parents or guardians, educators, and community agencies regarding strategies to help students and families.

**Personal Counseling:** Counseling is provided in small-group or individual settings for students experiencing difficulties dealing with relationships and personal concerns. Personal counseling assists students in identifying problems, causes, alternatives, and consequences leading to informed decision making.

**Crisis Counseling:** Counseling and support services are provided to students and families facing emotional crises as outlined in the school crisis management plan. Crisis counseling is normally short-term and temporary, using appropriate referral sources if necessary.

**Peer Helpers:** Counselors train students as peer helpers, conflict managers, tutors, and mentors. Programs should adhere to the ethics standards and practices established by the National Peer Helpers Association.

**Referrals:** Counselors use referral sources to enhance the services provided through the school counseling and guidance program. These referral sources may include, but are not restricted to:

* Mental Health Agencies
* Child Advocacy Center
* Juvenile Services

**System Support**

System support includes indirect guidance management activities that maintain and enhance the total counseling and guidance program. Responsibilities in this area include staff relations, community relations, professional development, and support teams. This component provides appropriate support to academic programs. Examples of system support delivery options within this component may include, but are not restricted to:

**Professional Development:** Counselors are regularly involved in updating professional knowledge and skills. This may involve participating in regular school in-service training, attending professional meetings, completing postgraduate course work, and contributing to professional journals.

**In-Service:** Counselors attend system and school in-service training to ensure counseling skills are updated in the areas of curriculum development, technology, and data analysis. Counselors may provide in-service instruction in school guidance curriculum and areas of special concern to the school and community.

**Consultation, Collaboration, and Teaming:** Counselors provide important contributions to the school system by consulting, partnering, collaborating, and teaming.

**Public Relations:** Counselors design activities to orient the staff and community about the comprehensive school counseling and guidance program.

**Community Outreach:** Counselors forge partnerships with local businesses, industries, and social service agencies. Community outreach requires counselors to be knowledgeable about community resources, employment opportunities, and local labor market information.

**Consultation with Staff:** Counselors consult regularly with teachers and professional staff members in order to receive feedback on emerging needs of students and to provide information and support to staff.

**Advisory Committees:** Counselors form counseling and guidance advisory committees at both the system and the individual school level. Counselors actively serve on community committees or advisory councils that influence other programs to generate support for system and individual school counseling and guidance programs.

**Program Management and Operations:** Planning and management tasks include the support of activities conducted in the school counseling and guidance program and responsibilities expected of a member of the school staff. Budget, facilities, policies and procedures, and research and resource development are elements of management activities.

**Research and Evaluation:** Some examples of counselor research and evaluation include *Educate Alabama* or other personnel guidance evaluations, program evaluations, data analysis, follow-up studies, professional development, and updating of resources.

**Fair-Share Responsibilities:** Fair-share responsibilities may include such tasks as bus duty, playground duty, class/club sponsorship, and taking tickets at sports events. Non-guidance responsibilities assigned to counselors should not be above and beyond those of other certified staff members, and should not interfere with the delivery of guidance services.

**Program Structural Components**

**Individual School Counseling and Guidance Advisory Committee**: In addition to the Fort Payne City Schools counseling and guidance advisory committee, Fort Payne Middle School will establish a counseling and guidance advisory committee to advise and assist with the development and implementation of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program as reflected in the Fort Payne City Schools advisory committee guidelines. The committee helps identify student needs and provides program support. The individual school counseling and guidance committee assists with the development and implementation of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program. Committee members represent all interested parties of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program: students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and community resource persons. It is recommended that the committee meet at least twice a year.

**Counseling and Guidance Department Organization**: At the beginning of the school year, counselors meet with principals regarding the counseling and guidance program. If there are two or more counselors in the school, specific/equitable duties and student caseloads should be assigned. Each LEA should have a counseling coordinator to work with principals and counselors to ensure that program planning, design, implementation, and evaluation take place in a timely, effective, and equitable manner.

Fort Payne Middle School will provide counseling and guidance services from certified school counselors in Grades 6 – 8 at a ratio designated for the type of school by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Adequate support personnel should be available to counselors to ensure effective program delivery.

**Principals’ Role**: Administrative support is critical to full implementation of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program. Principals, as chief administrators in schools, are ultimately responsible for the success of all instructional programs, including the school counseling and guidance program. Principals understand the role of school counselors and provide the necessary support for counselors to fulfill that role. Such support includes the provision of adequate facilities, materials, and clerical staff to allow counselors to use their specialized training in an effective manner. Principals provide input into program development and encourage and support participation of all school personnel in the implementation of the counseling and guidance program.

**Counselors’ Role**: Counselors assume the leadership role for managing and implementing the comprehensive counseling and guidance program in their school. Counselors are responsible for the systematic delivery and evaluation of structured developmental counseling and guidance services to all students. Counselors work directly with students, individually and in small groups, to deal with unique or problem-centered concerns that require more privacy or attention than can be accommodated in structured guidance activities. Counselors serve students indirectly by acting as consultants to administrators, teachers, parents, and others to help them understand and respond to the developmental, emotional, and social needs of students. Counselors coordinate various activities within the school that are related to student welfare. Appropriate referrals, placements, and follow-ups are activities that are particularly pertinent to counseling.

**Elementary School Counselors (Grade 6)**:

At the elementary level, counselors assist students in their efforts to learn the skills and attitudes required for school success. Elementary school counselors emphasize decision-making skills and early exploration of career and educational goals. These counselors also place strong emphasis on helping students develop self-awareness, self-esteem, and good interpersonal relationships.

**Middle School Counselors (Grade 7 and 8)**:

During the middle school grades, counselors’ concerns shift to the changing needs of the young adolescent. Middle school counselors focus on helping students to establish, identify, and balance academic, career, and personal/social goals. Efforts begun in elementary schools are continued and expanded, although an emphasis is placed on the transition into high school. In addition, middle school counselors help students integrate knowledge of their interests, aptitude, and academic skills into the formation of a high school four-year educational plan and educational/career planning portfolio for high school and beyond.

**Teachers’ Role**: Teachers play a vital role in the planning and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling and guidance program. As professionals who have the greatest contact with students, teachers are in the best position to recognize and help provide for the developmental and individual needs of students. Through appropriate communication and referral, teachers facilitate the interaction between students and counselors. Teachers demonstrate support for the program by providing adequate opportunities for student-counselor contact. Teachers contribute directly to the school counseling and guidance program by helping counselors deliver programs that facilitate the academic, career, and personal/social development of students. Teachers strengthen and follow through on concepts presented to help students retain the knowledge, skills, and understanding established through the program. Teacher support, input, and expertise make it possible for the school counseling and guidance program to become an integral part of the total educational program.

**Guidance Resources**: Appropriate guidance resources are required for each of the four program delivery components: School Guidance Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support. These resources include equipment and materials, staff expertise, and community resources. Resource materials must be relevant to the program, appropriate for the diversity of the school and community, and of sufficient quantity to be useful. All counselors should be provided the necessary equipment and materials to implement the comprehensive counseling and guidance program.

**Use of Time**: The following percentages serve as a guide to school counselors and administrators for determining the time the program needs to allocate for each of the four program delivery components. School counselors should keep daily records that document time and activities performed. These records allow counselors and administrators to determine the actual amount of time spent in each of the four program delivery components and in non-school counseling activities. In this way, adjustments can be made to better utilize counselor time so that the greatest amount of time is spent in direct service to students.

**Program Goals for Students**

School counseling and guidance programs throughout Alabama may differ in recognized need; however, every school system and school must develop a comprehensive, outcome-based, and developmental counseling and guidance program. The ASCA has developed national standards to better define the role of school counseling and guidance programs. The standards address program content and identify broad areas of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that all students develop as a result of participating in an effective school counseling and guidance program.

Alabama has utilized *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* to provide all essential elements for developing programs to help students achieve success in school. The ASCA National Standards, located below and on pages 15-20 of this document, facilitate student development in three domains: Academic Development, Career Development, and Personal/Social Development.

**Program Accountability Components**

Accountability and evaluation of Fort Payne Middle School Counselors and the school counseling and guidance program are integral components of quality programs. Fort Payne Middle School’s comprehensive school counseling and guidance programs should be data driven. This means data should be collected to validate certain counseling and guidance activities as well as to determine if any change in student perception and behavior has occurred as a result of counseling and guidance activities. School counselors and the comprehensive counseling and guidance program must answer the question, “How are students different as a result of the school counseling and guidance program?” Now, more than ever, school counselors are challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs in measurable terms. This is accomplished through continuous program evaluations and student results evaluations that assess the implementation of a comprehensive counseling and guidance program that must follow the Minimum Requirements for School Counseling and Guidance Programs in Alabama. The monitoring of student progress and program progress in addition to performing personnel evaluations requires the collection of data that support and link school counseling and guidance programs to students’ academic success.

**Monitoring Student Progress**: Counselors of data-driven school counseling and guidance programs are able to determine what, if any, student change has occurred as a result of their efforts. Data analysis allows school counselors, administrators, faculty, and advisory committee members to create a current picture of students and the school environment. Careful analysis of the current situation allows discussion and planning to focus on student needs and the counselor’s role in addressing those needs.

**Student Date**: Using student, school site, and system data to monitor student progress ensures that every student receives the necessary support to be successful in school. In order for this to occur, school counselors must be proficient in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student achievement and related data. Monitoring student progress is part of the school counselor’s responsibility as indicated in this document in the section, “Individual Student Planning.” To achieve this goal, school counselors monitor student progress through three types of data: student-achievement data, achievement-related data, and standards- and competency-related data.

Student-achievement datameasure academic progress. Student-achievement data include:

* ACAP Summative & ACAP Alternate
* I-Ready
* ACCESS 2.0 & ACCESS 2.0 Alternate
* Grade level (at or above) in reading, math, and other content areas
* Successful completion of all courses
* Promotion and retention rates
* Completion of specific academic programs (academic honors)

**Achievement-related data:** measure those areas shown to be correlated to academic success. Achievement-related data include:

* Suspension and expulsion rates
* Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug violations
* Attendance rates
* Parent or guardian involvement
* Participation in extracurricular activities
* Homework completion rates

**Standards- and competency-related data:** measure student mastery of the competencies delineated in the comprehensive counseling and guidance program. These data include:

* + - * Percentage of students having a four-year plan on file
      * Percentage of students setting and attaining academic goals
      * Percentage of students applying conflict resolution skills

**Disaggregated Data**: Ensuring academic success for every student includes counselor-initiated activities designed to meet the needs of under-served, under-performing, and under-represented populations. School counselors do this by examining student academic achievement data and developing outcome-based interventions designed to help students succeed. Alabama’s school counselors must not only look at data globally, but also must be able to disaggregate data. School counselors must be able to separate data by variables to determine if there are any groups of students who may not be performing as well as others. Disaggregated data often precipitate change because they bring to light issues of equity and focus the discussion upon the needs of specific groups of students. Examples of databases to be examined are:

* Gender
* Ethnicity
* Socioeconomic status
* Vocational program
* Language spoken at home
* Special education
* Grade level

**Data Over Time**: Collecting immediate, intermediate, and long-range data allows the school counselor to gain a true picture of the impact of the school counseling and guidance program. Immediate data measure the impact of knowledge, skills, and attitude change as a result of counselor activity or intervention. Intermediate data measure the application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes over a short period of time. Long-range data are longitudinal and examine trends from year to year.

Assessing the current school counseling and guidance program reveals how well the program is meeting the academic, career, and personal/social needs of students. The process of data gathering and analysis ensures that school guidance and counseling implementation plans are rooted in a clear understanding of the particular and unique needs of students. School counselors should determine student needs that are unique to their school and community. Data analysis is the mechanism by which the practicing school counselor is able to acquire specific information to best understand these needs.

**Monitoring Program Progress**

**Program Evaluations**: Evaluation of the comprehensive counseling and guidance program is a vital element in determining the effectiveness of the school program. The counseling and guidance program evaluation provides a means for enhancing and improving the program and demonstrating accountability. An evaluation of the counseling and guidance program using process data, perception data, and results data measures the degree to which students have acquired the skills and knowledge defined by the competencies and the Minimum Requirements for School Counseling and Guidance Programs in Alabama.

Results evaluations and the results report serve as a tool for:

* Ensuring the program is carried out as planned
* Ensuring every student is served
* Ensuring developmentally appropriate materials are used
* Documenting the program’s process, perception, and results
* Documenting the program’s immediate, intermediate, and long-range impact
* Analyzing program effectiveness
* Sharing program successes
* Improving the program
* Advocating for systematic change in the school system

The results report for school guidance curriculum may include the following:

* + - * Grade level served
      * Lesson content areas
      * Curriculum or materials used
      * Number of school counseling lessons delivered
      * Subject area of school counseling lessons
      * Number of students served
      * Short-term perception data such as pre/post tests
      * Intermediate and long-term results data such as impact on behavior, attendance, or achievement
      * Implications of the results on the counseling and guidance program