

Executive Summary

Strengthening State Guidance Leadership for the 21st Century

The Need

In this the first decade of the 21st century, the United States and countries around the world continue to undergo substantial changes industrially, occupationally, socially, and economically. These changes are creating real challenges for children and young people. A rapidly changing work world and labor force in a global economy; violence in homes, schools, and communities; divorce; teenage suicide; substance abuse; and sexual experimentation are just a few example of these challenges. These challenges are real and they are having dramatic impact on the personal/social, career, and academic development of children and young people.

A Response

Comprehensive guidance programs are effective in assisting children and young people, along with their parents, respond to these and similar challenges. Over twenty years of empirical research have documented that when school counselors have time, resources, and the structure of a comprehensive program to work in, good things happen. Here are just a few examples:

- Guidance interventions improve academic achievement
- Students take more demanding courses
- Students develop and use career plans
- Schools have more positive climates

A Key

A key to the successful development and implementation of effective guidance programs at the local level is strong state-level guidance leadership, leadership which provides regular ongoing training, resources, and technical support, as well as legislative and policy advocacy at the state level.

The Problem

The presence of experienced, professionally trained state-level guidance supervisors across the country is perilously low. Too often, states allow long lapses between personnel changes or assign individuals with numerous other roles, guidance responsibilities. It is the considered opinion of the guidance leadership across the country that the future growth and refinement of the comprehensive guidance program movement is seriously threatened by the lack of highly trained guidance professionals at the state level.

A Recommendation

Research has documented the central role guidance programs play in student achievement, school improvement, and school reform. Practical experience and common knowledge make it clear that a key to successful guidance programs at the local level is strong state-level leadership. And, since the presence of experienced, professionally trained state-level supervisors across the country is perilously low, it is our recommendation that a Guidance Leadership Academy be established and funded to prepare state-level guidance leaders for this new millennium.

Strengthening State Guidance Leadership for the 21st Century

In this the first decade of the 21st century, Friedman (2005) declared that the “world is flat”, meaning that individuals and companies are collaborating and competing globally. Why is the world flat? According to Friedman the world is flat because of ten forces at work including the falling of the Berlin wall, the introduction of Netscape, work flow software, open-sourcing, outsourcing, offshoring, supply-chaining, insourcing, informing, and finally, by something he called the steroids – digital processing.

As the power of these forces continue to unfold, they are causing substantial and long lasting changes in the occupational, industrial, and social structures of the United States and countries around the world, changes that are having dramatic impact on work and the work place. Work and work places are becoming more global, characterized by technological change moving at near light speed. “More and more workers and the organizations in which they work are developing global identities” (Feller & Whichard, 2005, p. 23).

Social structures and social and personal values also continue to change and become more diverse. Emerging social groups are challenging established groups, asking for equality. People are on the move, too, from rural to urban areas and back again and from one region of the country to another in search of economic, social and psychological security. Our population is becoming increasingly diverse.

All of these changes are creating substantial challenges for our children and adolescents. A rapidly changing work world and labor force in a global economy; violence in the home, school, and community; divorce, teenage suicide; substance abuse; and sexual experimentation are just a few examples. These challenges are not abstract aberrations. These challenges are real, and are having and will continue to have

substantial impact on the personal/social, career, and academic development of our children and adolescents. (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006)

Now, more than ever before, given these dramatic challenges, it is imperative that young people today are prepared to make successful transitions within our educational system, to work, or to further education upon leaving our K-12 institutions so that they can become successful participants in the workforce. What knowledge, skills, and attitudes will be required of students for these purposes? The report of the National Center on Education and the Economy (2007) titled “Tough Choices Tough Times” recommended the following:

Strong skills in English, mathematics, technology, and science, as well as literature, history, and the arts will be essential for many; beyond this, candidates will have to be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, good at both analysis and synthesis, creative and innovative, self-disciplined and well organized, able to learn very quickly and work well as a member of a team and have the flexibility to adapt quickly to frequent changes in the labor market as the shifts in the economy become ever faster and more dramatic. (p. 8)

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes such as these do not appear suddenly on the day students are ready to leave school. On the contrary, they require substantial time and attention to develop, be assimilated, and used by students. They require time and attention beginning in elementary school. Their development requires strong academic and career and technical education preparation as well as comprehensive guidance and counseling programs that feature career guidance and counseling and related academic and personal/social activities.

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 Implications for Guidance and Counseling

A critical task for state-level guidance leaders is leveraging federal and state funds that enable them to carry out their important leadership roles. A major source of funding for over 90 years has been federal legislation for career and technical education. The current version of this legislation is the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006*.

What does the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006* say about guidance? School counselors are mentioned over 16 times in the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006*. Five times school counselors are simply called counselors. The term career guidance and academic counselors is used 10 times while the term career guidance and academic counseling professionals is used once. Most of these references focus on the initial training and the professional development of counselors along with career and technical education teachers and administrators.

The Act also provides several definitions of career guidance and academic counseling. The first definition in Section 3 of the Act states that the term career guidance and academic counseling means guidance and counseling that provides access for students and parents to information regarding career awareness and planning and provides information about career options, financial aid, and post secondary options, including baccalaureate degree programs. In Section 118 the description of career guidance and academic counseling uses the word programs that promote career and education decision making focusing on education and training options and preparations for high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations and non-traditional fields. Finally

in Section 124 of the Act career guidance and academic counseling is described as a program that assists students in making informed academic and career and technical education decisions including encouraging secondary and post secondary students to graduate with a diploma or degree, exposing students to high skill, high wage occupations, and non-traditional fields as well as academic financial aid counseling.

The *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006* is most important for the work of state-level guidance leaders? It can be a source of funding at the state level to assure that adequate personnel, staff training, and the necessary equipment and materials can be provided to local districts. It is important because it can provide state-level guidance leaders with the necessary support and resources to provide state-wide leadership to strongly support school counselors and counselor educators.

We encourage Career and Technical Education leaders to implement the intent of the Carl D Perkins Act, by investing in the training and retraining of our nations school counselors in regular schools and career centers for all ages.

The No Child Left Behind Act has numerous implications for Guidance and Counseling programs that is underutilized. It offers several unique chances for counselors to work with teachers, parents, students and principals. Working with teachers to help them understand state assessment purposes and resulting data and how their students are performing; using the results to drive individualized as well as classroom instruction: helping teachers to adapt their methods for students that aren't mastering subject matter that they are capable of.

No Child Left Behind can also help Principals to understand and use the test results as a check on how well their schools are doing to help students master the expected

academic content standards: helping teachers and principals to design instructional strategies aimed at helping kids be better test takers: helping principals to make data-driven decision about professional development activities for teachers.

With the children and parents new and complete test data helps them understand their performance on state required assessments and to see where they are strong and where they are not. It also helps them decide when additional services such a as tutoring and counseling might be most beneficial.

In the final analysis, the legislation helps every one involved to understand what needs to be tested, what the measurements are measuring, what is expected of the student, and how to use the data to improve the teaching and learning process. Last it helps educators understand how to improve the school climate for all students.

The Critical Roles of State-Level Guidance Leader

As these and other changes are taking place in our society, many organizations and groups of interested and involved citizens are providing programs and services at national, state, and local levels to assist children and young people deal effectively with these challenges. Within the education community, school counselors have been, and are in the forefront of responding to these challenges through their work in developing and managing comprehensive guidance programs in school districts across the country. For their work on behalf of children and young people to be effective at the local level, however, many years of experience has shown that strong state leadership of guidance programs is a major requirement.

State-level guidance leaders play key roles in advocating for, and supporting the development of, comprehensive guidance programs at the local level.

These roles include:

- providing training for counselors, teachers, and principals.
- Developing state guidance models.
- Training district-level guidance/student-service directors.
- Improving counselor training standards consistent with competencies required for developing and managing guidance programs.
- Developing and monitoring accreditation standards for guidance programs.
- Securing state-appropriated funding for schools that meet guidance program standards.
- Providing technical assistance to schools and districts.
- Advocating for comprehensive guidance programs with state legislators, state board of education members, the media, and administrative and parent groups.
- Helping local school districts evaluate their guidance programs.

A Shortage of Experienced, Professionally Trained State-Level Guidance Leaders

Unfortunately, the number of experienced, professionally trained state-level guidance leaders that play these critical roles continues to decrease. Too often, states allow long lapses between personal changes in this position. Sometimes individuals with numerous other roles at the state level have guidance simply added to their assignment. And, what is worse, many states have no one assigned to provide leadership to guidance at the state and local levels.

The future growth and refinement of the comprehensive guidance program movement in this country is seriously threatened by the lack of highly trained guidance professionals at the state level. District-level leaders are often wholly preoccupied with legal issues of student deportment, and are so immersed in the management of crises

events that they can give only minimal attention to supporting the development of effective guidance programs in their districts. Too often, this leaves individual counselors or, at best, counseling teams at a school, with the full responsibility for the transformation of guidance in their schools. To their credit, a number of schools have succeeded, but progress is too slow and too difficult to sustain when local and state leadership are not present.

A guidance program defined and operated individually in every school building in a district can be no more effective than a math, science, or social studies program that also is defined and operated only in each individual school building. For any program to be effective, all those charged with the responsibility for the program, including school boards, administrators, counselors, parents, and teachers, must share common expectations on such things as scope and sequence, expected student results, and accountability. For this reason, education programs are often rooted in legislation. It was no accident that the growth of guidance as a “program” in the 1980s coincided with the legislative language of the *Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984* which set aside funding for such purposes, including state leadership for guidance.

The growth of comprehensive guidance programs in the 1990s into this the 21st century has continued at a brisk pace. In 1997 the American School Counselor association (ASCA) published *National Standards for School Counseling Programs* that described student outcomes in the three domains of academic, career, and personal/social (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Similarly, the *National Career Development Guidelines* were published in 2006 by America’s Career Resource Network (ACRN) describing student outcomes. In 2003, the American School Counselor Association (2003) published *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*. In 2000 the National

Consortium of State Guidance Leaders, along with national guidance leaders published *A National Framework for Career Guidance Programs*.

The Need for Line Authority: The Need for State-Level Guidance Leadership

While these developments have been most helpful and supportive of the emergence of guidance programs in districts across the country, they represent in large measure, the work of professional groups and agencies which, while very important, do not speak for the line authority in education. Comprehensive guidance programs will be most effective when policy bodies, superintendents, and principals, as well as professional school counselors, speak with one mind and one language on this topic. State-level guidance leadership is key to bringing line authority to bear in support of guidance programs at the local level.

National legislation and guidelines from ACRN, the National Guidance Consortium and ASCA have helped to lead the way, but strong guidance leadership must also be established and supported at the state level. Comprehensive guidance programs developed in an individual school building or district devoid of state-level leadership and support are as vulnerable as a house without a solid foundation. Nationwide experience over the last twenty years strongly suggests that state and local education agencies must work together to establish a common vision and common expectations for their guidance programs through the enactment of legislation and the establishment of State Board policy consistent with state practice. School boards, superintendents, principals, counselors, and teachers must understand the organizational structure of comprehensive guidance programs and their contributions to student academic achievement and in important student behaviors that affect academic achievement. Such understanding is essential if comprehensive guidance programs are to be articulated developmentally

across all grade levels. Maintaining the continuity of guidance programs, and guaranteeing their sustainability over time, are wholly dependent on all individuals at all levels in our educational system being fully familiar with and supportive of comprehensive guidance programs.

Budgets and Accountability

In addition to national guidelines and state-level leadership, comprehensive guidance programs must be supported with a budget. While funding patterns vary widely across the nation, it is imperative that funding for comprehensive guidance programs be addressed at a level that will assure adequate personnel, staff training, and the purchase of necessary equipment and materials. Inadequate funding for comprehensive guidance programs poses the same threat to the viability of the program that it poses to academic and career and technical education programs. Funding for comprehensive guidance programs is essential to not only establish, but also to maintain and enhance these programs. State-level guidance leadership plays a significant role in addressing issues of guidance funding.

State-level guidance leaders also play a critical role in comprehensive guidance program accountability. They work at state and local levels to help develop program standards for guidance. For example, Missouri uses a statewide accreditation process as a primary accountability vehicle. Utah provides comprehensive guidance program funding to schools, which meet program standards, utilizing a school self study and peer review process to validate compliance with the standards. In both states, state-level guidance leaders were active participants in the development of these standards, thereby advancing the sustainability and effectiveness of their comprehensive guidance programs.

Establishing a Workforce of State-Level Guidance Leaders

One of the most significant and urgent needs relative to developing and implementing effective comprehensive guidance programs in every school district in the nation is to establish a workforce of highly trained and experienced guidance leaders at the state level in every state. We call on the United States Department of Education, the nation's governors, the chief state school officers, state legislatures, and state boards of education to recognize this need and to provide adequate staffing for guidance with the necessary funding within state departments of education. We further call on these groups and others, including business and industry and public and private foundations to respond to our urgent call for the establishment and funding of a Guidance Leadership Academy to address the critical need of strengthening state guidance leadership in this new millennium. The National Consortium of Guidance Leadership, with the help of a large group of state and national guidance leaders, created a plan for such a Guidance Leadership Academy in 2002, with the hope that it would receive funding support.

Further understanding of the critical need for state-level leadership for comprehensive guidance programs can be gained by reviewing the nature of other educational programs. Education programs are defined by structural elements that include the required preparation of teachers, the scope and sequence of the subject to be taught, the needed resource materials, and the space/lab requirements. Consistency and continuity of a program are achieved only when sufficient structure is built around the program to assure that the program maintains stability and is improved over time. It is important to recognize that most educational programs are fragile and subject to the shifting whims of time, place, and personnel. This is certainly true of comprehensive guidance programs. Stability for comprehensive guidance programs can be gained only

when these required elements are encapsulated in regional or state accreditation standards and expressed in state or district policy, and supported by strong state-level guidance leadership.

What are Comprehensive Guidance Programs?

Today, in the United States, the major way to organize guidance activities and services in schools is the comprehensive guidance program (American School Counselor Association, 2003; Gysbers & Henderson, 2006; Myrick, 2003). The use of the comprehensive guidance program approach began as early as the 1980s (Gysbers & Moore, 1981), based on work undertaken in the 1970s (Gysbers & Moore, 1975). In 2003 the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) endorsed the concept by publishing the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003) and by the state guidance leadership when they published their Standards for A National Framework for Guidance and Counseling Programs.

A comprehensive guidance and counseling program as described by Gysbers and Henderson (2006) consists of four elements; content, organizational framework, resources, and development, management, and accountability. The content element contains knowledge and skills (cast as standards) considered important for students to acquire as a result of their participation in a school district's comprehensive guidance and counseling program. The organizational framework contains three structural components (definition, rationale, assumptions), four program components (guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, system support), along with a suggested distribution of school counselor time by grade levels across the four program components. The resource element consists of the human, financial, and political resources required to fully implementing the program. Finally, the development,

management, and accountability element describes the five transition phases required to fully operationalize a comprehensive guidance and counseling program along with the management tasks involved as well as the three types of accountability: program, personnel, and results.

Content

The content of the program identifies student outcomes cast as standards considered important by school districts for students to master as a result of their participation in districts' comprehensive guidance programs. The standards are often organized around areas or domains, such as career, academic, and personal/social.

Organizational Framework

The organizational framework contains structural components and program components. The structural components define the guidance program, provide a rationale for it, and list basic assumptions that undergird the program. The program components identify the four parts of the delivery system that organize the program's guidance activities and interventions. The program components are guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support.

The guidance curriculum systematically imparts guidance content to all students. Individual student planning focuses on the increasing need for all students to work closely with their parents to plan, monitor, and manage their development and to take informed action on their personal, educational, and career goals. Responsive services respond to the immediate needs and concerns of students, whether these concerns and needs involve individual counseling, small group counseling, referral, or consultation with parents, teachers, or other specialists. Finally, system support includes activities such as staff development, research, and curriculum development to make sure the full

comprehensive guidance program operates effectively. System support also includes activities that provide assistance to other programs in a school.

How school counselors use their professional time within the comprehensive guidance program is important. The four program components provide the structure for making decisions about the appropriate allocations of school counselors' time. One criterion that is used is program balance. School counselors' time must be allocated across all program components but especially the first three. At least eighty percent of a school counselor's time should be in direct services to students, parents, teachers, and administrators through the program components of guidance curriculum, individual planning, and responsive services. Twenty percent should be devoted to indirect services in system support.

Resources

Human resources for comprehensive guidance programs include school counselors, teachers, administrators, parents, students, community members, and business and labor personnel. All have key roles to play. While school counselors are the main providers of guidance and counseling services and are the coordinators of the program, the involvement, cooperation, and support of teachers and administrators is critical for program success. The involvement, cooperation, and support of parents, community members, and business and labor personnel are also critical.

Adequate financial resources are required if a comprehensive guidance program is to be successful. Financial resources include materials, equipment, and facilities. To make the guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support components function effectively, adequate guidance facilities, equipment, and budgets are required.

The mobilization of political resources in a school district is key to a successful guidance program. Full endorsement of the guidance program by the board of education of the school district as a “district program of studies” is critical. In addition, the adoption of a school district policy that highlights the integral and central nature of the school district’s comprehensive guidance program also is critical.

Development, Management, and Accountability

Five transition phases are required to fully implement comprehensive guidance programs. These transition phases are planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and enhancing. As programs are being implemented following these five transition phases, various management tasks are required to be performed by school counselors and administrators including establishing steering and community advisory committees, designing the program framework, allocating professional school counselor time, and developing and using job descriptions to guide the work of school counselors and provide for their evaluation.

For the comprehensive guidance program to be accountable, the following formula is used: Program + Personnel = Results. This means that the program must be in place and functioning fully and the personnel involved must be spending full time in carrying out the program to produce results in student academic achievement and in important student behaviors that effect academic achievement.

Do Comprehensive Guidance Programs Produce Measurable Results?

The Answer is Yes!

Over twenty years of empirical research provide clear and substantial evidence that comprehensive guidance programs produce measurable results. When guidance is developed and delivered as a program, the student results are most encouraging.

Gerler (1985) analyzed a decade of research on the results of elementary school guidance and counseling program interventions in the affective, behavioral, and interpersonal domain of students' lives, and found that these programs affected students' academic achievement positively. Similar results were found by St. Claire (1989) in her review of the impact of guidance and counseling program interventions at the middle-school level. Evans and Burck (1992) conducted a meta-analysis of 67 studies concerning the impact of career education interventions (career guidance) on students' academic achievement. The results supported the value of these interventions as contributors to the academic achievement of students. Finally, in a major review of the literature in school guidance, Borders and Drury (1992) found that guidance and counseling program interventions have a substantial impact on students' success in the classroom.

While some student results may appear early in the implementation of a comprehensive guidance program, most occur only after the program has been fully operational for a period of time. In a study conducted in high schools in Missouri, Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997) found that students in high schools with more fully implemented guidance program were more likely to report that they had earned higher grades, their education was better preparing them for their future, their school made more career and college information available to them, and their school had a more positive climate. In Utah, Nelson and Gardner (1998) found that students in schools with more fully implemented guidance programs rated their overall education as better, took more advanced mathematics and science courses, and had higher scores on every scale of the ACT.

In their review of outcome research in school counseling, Sexton, Whiston, Bleuer, and Walz (1997, p. 125) made the following points:

- Reviews of outcome research in school counseling are generally positive about the effects of school counseling.
- Research results do indicate that individual planning interventions can have a positive impact on the development of students' career plans. There is some support for responsive services activities such as social skills training, family support programs, and peer counseling.
- Consultation activities are also found to be an effective school counseling activity.

In this first decade of the 21st century, student academic achievement has become a major concern in the schools since the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110)* in 2001 (McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005). Studies conducted in this time period have demonstrated outcomes similar to studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2001) found that when 4868 middle school classroom teachers in Missouri in 184 small-, medium-, and large-size middle schools rated guidance programs in their schools as more fully implemented, 22,601 seventh graders in these schools reported that they earned higher grades, school was more relevant for them, they had positive relationships with teachers, they were more satisfied with their education, and they felt safer in school. Sink and Stroh (2003), in a comparison of elementary students (Grades 3 and 4) enrolled for several years in well-established comprehensive school counseling program schools with students enrolled in schools without such programs, found that students enrolled in schools with the well-established programs have significantly higher academic achievement test scores on the

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills—Form M and the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. Finally, in another study in Missouri, Lapan, Gysbers, and Kayson (2007) found that when school counselors in Missouri work in schools that have more fully implemented guidance programs, they make significant contributions to overall student academic achievement and in important student behaviors that affect academic achievement. In high schools with more fully implemented programs students had higher 10th grade MAP mathematics scores and higher 10th grade MAP communication arts scores. They also were more likely to attend school, have fewer discipline programs, and receive fewer out-of-school suspensions.

Do guidance programs produce measurable results? The answer is yes! It is important to understand, however, that to see results from comprehensive guidance programs, school counselors must be well trained and have the time and the resources to do their work. They must also have the necessary organizational framework—the comprehensive guidance program—in which to do their work.

Five Basic Premises for Comprehensive Guidance Programs

The previous section has presented compelling evidence that comprehensive guidance programs have substantial impact on student academic achievement and on important student behaviors that affect academic achievement. When school counselors have the time, resources, and necessary organizational structure to provide systematic guidance interventions, and when comprehensive guidance programs are central in the delivery of overall education, the effects of guidance are clearly visible. Given these effects, it is clear that comprehensive guidance programs and the work of school counselors play a central role in school improvement and educational reform.

To ensure that comprehensive guidance programs and the work of school counselors play a central role in school improvement and educational reform, there are five basic premises (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006) that must undergird the development and management of comprehensive guidance programs in the schools. The five basic premises are as follows:

1. *Guidance is a program.* Its characteristics are similar to other programs in education and includes the following:
 - Student standards
 - Activities and processes to assist students in achieving these standards
 - Professionally certificated personnel
 - Materials and resources
 - Program, personnel, and results evaluation
2. *Guidance programs are developmental and comprehensive.* They are developmental in that guidance activities are conducted on a regular, planned, and systematic basis to assist students in their academic, career, and personal/social development. Although immediate and crisis needs of students are to be met, a major focus of a developmental program is to provide all students with experiences to help them grow and develop. Guidance programs are comprehensive in that a full range of activities and services are provided.
3. *Guidance programs feature a team approach.* A comprehensive, developmental program of guidance is based on the assumption that all school staff is 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 relations with other members of the guidance team, members of the school staff, parents, and members of the community.

4. *Guidance 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.
5. *Guidance programs have established leadership.* This ensures accountability for the program and for the quality of the performance of program staff.

The Bottom Line: Full Time State-Level Guidance Leadership

Effective comprehensive guidance programs at the local level require effective full time state-level leadership. Effective comprehensive guidance programs require budget support and accountability standards tied to program accreditation. Effective comprehensive guidance programs require a common vision of guidance and an understanding of the central role that guidance plays in student achievement, school improvement, and school reform.

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