

1 Guidance and counseling programs are provided by the school system with the ultimate aim of  
2 improving student performance by implementing strategies and activities that support and  
3 maximize student learning; helping students to grow in their personal and social development;  
4 and providing a foundation for acquiring the skills that enable students to graduate career and  
5 college ready and prepared to be lifelong learners. The principal of each school shall develop a  
6 counseling program that is data-driven and meets the objectives of the State Board of  
7 Education's comprehensive school counseling program curriculum and the academic, career, and  
8 social/emotional developmental needs of the student population at that school. The program will  
9 include individual and group counseling, classroom presentations, academic advising, career  
10 development services, consultation, parent education, and other responsive services.

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12 In addition, the counseling program will incorporate the following specific elements.

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14 **A. INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS AND OTHERS**

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16 The counseling program is the shared responsibility of teachers, counselors, parents, and  
17 community members, and should operate with the collaboration of all individuals  
18 involved in educating students, including those who assist children with special needs or  
19 students who are at risk of dropping out of school or not meeting performance  
20 expectations. Input from parents and students should be sought in accordance with the  
21 school's parental involvement plan. (See policy 1310/4002, Parental Involvement.)

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23 Each year, the principal or designee shall inform parents of the guidance and counseling  
24 services available to students. Parents will be notified of the right to opt their students  
25 out of participation in certain group academic or career guidance or personal or social  
26 counseling services of a generic nature (see policy 1310/4002).

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28 **B. PROVISION OF COUNSELING SERVICES**

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30 Counseling services may be provided on an individual basis or in small or large groups.

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32 Students may seek counseling or be referred by staff or parents. School officials and  
33 teachers may recommend a counseling program to help a student meet standards of  
34 conduct and academic performance established by the board and school system  
35 administrators. If students have extensive needs or needs that go beyond the purpose of  
36 the counseling program, school counselors may refer them to community resources.

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38 Counseling programs are most effective when voluntarily entered into by a student.  
39 Students will not be required to attend individual or small group counseling sessions to  
40 address identified significant personal issues unless agreement has been reached with the  
41 parent and student in a behavior contract, an intervention plan, or, for special education  
42 students, an individualized education plan. (See Student Behavior Policies (4300 series),  
43 policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability, and policy 3520, Special Education  
44 Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities.)

**C. PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

All schools with grades six and higher will have peer-to-peer student support programs that address areas such as conflict resolution, general health and wellness, and mentoring. Schools are encouraged to implement peer-to-peer student support programs in other grades as appropriate.

**D. ACADEMIC ADVISING**

School counselors and other guiding adults in middle and high schools shall support equitable access to opportunities and rigorous and relevant curricula for all students. Prior to the ninth grade, students will be informed about the course requirements for regular and accelerated college entry and the availability of early graduate scholarships for those students who complete high school in three years. School counselors shall encourage ninth grade students to complete the requirements for college entry in less than four years, if feasible and appropriate.

**E. NOTIFICATION OF SAFE SURRENDER LAW**

School personnel shall annually provide all students in grades 9 through 12 with information on the manner in which a parent may lawfully abandon a newborn baby with a responsible person, in accordance with Article 5A of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes G.S. 7B-500.

**F. EMPLOYEE MANDATORY REPORTING**

Staff member reporting of students in crisis shall be in accordance with the District's Crisis Plan and Suicide Risk Protocol.

Any counselor or other staff member who knows or has cause to suspect maltreatment of a child must report the information as provided in policy 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety, and as required by law.

**G. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information obtained in a session with a counselor may be privileged and protected from disclosure as provided by law. A counselor cannot be required to testify concerning privileged information unless, as provided by G.S. 8-53.4, the student waives the privilege or the court compels testimony as necessary to the proper administration of justice. The school counselor privilege does not, however, exempt the counselor from reporting child abuse as required by law and policy 4240/7312.

88 Any notation made by a counselor for his or her own use is a confidential document and  
89 is neither a public record nor a part of the student's record. Such confidential documents  
90 do not have to be shared with parents or others except as required by law. Any document  
91 prepared by a counselor that is shared or intended to be shared with other staff is  
92 considered an educational record of the student and is available to the parent or eligible  
93 student in accordance with policy 4700, Student Records.  
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95 Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 7B-301,—  
96 ~~500~~; **7B art. 5A**; 8-53.4; 110-105.4; 115C-12, -47, -400, -401; **116 art. 23**; State Board of  
97 Education Policies GRAD-006, SCOS-011  
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99 Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), Goals and Objectives of the  
100 Educational Program (policy 3000), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420),  
101 Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities (policy 3520), Child Abuse and  
102 Related Threats to Child Safety (policy 4240/7312), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series),  
103 Student Records (policy 4700)  
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105 Adopted: January 19, 2016  
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107 Revised: February 19, 2018 (legal references only); September 21, 2020; August 2, 2021;  
108 **[DATE]**