

SOUTH BUFFALO CHARTER SCHOOL

Comprehensive K-8 School Counseling Program



created: April 2017 (last revision: September 2024)

South Buffalo Charter School
154 South Ogden Street
Buffalo, New York 14210

Preface

The South Buffalo Charter School's ***Comprehensive K-8 School Counseling Program*** aims to highlight the mission, philosophy, and goals of the School Counseling Team, define the roles of the school counselors/social workers and illustrate how these individuals help students develop a set of competencies that ultimately assist them in meeting the New York State Learning Standards.

SBCS Counseling Personnel

Counselors: Lemuel Graham
Carole Taggart
Social Workers: Katherine Jafari
Madelyn Reed

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Mission Statement

The School Counseling Team of the South Buffalo Charter School utilizes a proactive approach to encourage healthy social-emotional development by providing a continuum of student and family support to promote academic, social and emotional success at SBCS and beyond.

District Mission Statement

The South Buffalo Charter School is a Collaborative Learning Community. Our focus on learning is driven by research, data and collaborative reflection to increase student achievement. We are dedicated to creating students that are prepared for the 21st century through an environment that encompasses character education, technology integration and rigorous academics.

Philosophy and Beliefs

SBCS counselors/social workers believe:

1. All students are capable of achieving success.
2. All students have dignity, worth, unique characteristics and potential.
3. All students should be active participants in achieving their goals.
4. All students learn best when they are meaningfully engaged in their learning.

We believe the school counseling program:

1. Is available to empower all students.
2. Is comprehensive, developmental and central to the school mission.
3. Is proactive in supporting all students to achieve success in school and to be responsible and productive members of society.
4. Is available to families, staff and the community in support of all students.

All school counselors/social workers advocate for students by:

1. Facilitating resiliency and belonging through listening and responding to student needs and interests.
2. Promoting a positive, safe and healthy school wide culture.
3. Possessing expertise, specialized training, and NYS certification in school counseling.
4. Abiding by ASCA ethical standards.

Goals

The purpose of South Buffalo Charter School's ***Comprehensive K-8 School Counseling program*** is to deliver services based on nationwide standards in every support service area. Our team provides academic, career, personal/social, and responsive services to ensure that the goals listed below are achieved.

Academic:

- To provide academic support for all students
- To help students develop decision-making and problem-solving skills
- To encourage students to become self-directed, independent learners

Personal/Social:

- To teach students to embrace diversity and promote tolerance
- To infuse character education within the school environment
- To teach students coping skills for daily living
- To encourage student citizenship in the community

Career:

- To allow students to explore creative interests
- To assist students in pursuing secondary goals
- To promote student knowledge and understanding of future career exploration

Responsive Services:

- To impart lifelong learning skills for continued personal growth
- To maximize support services in times of crisis
- To utilize collaboration, counseling, consultation and coordination with fidelity

Standards

All members of the School Counseling Team follow a set of standards specific to their area of expertise that allow them to effectively meet student needs. The standards for school counselors are shown on the following pages.

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Standards for Students

The ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success:

K-12 College—and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student

Each of the following standards can be applied to the academic, career and social/emotional domains.

Category 1: Mindset Standards

School Counselors encourage the following mindsets for all students.

1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being
2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed
3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
4. Understanding that postsecondary education and life-long learning are necessary for long-term career success
5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes
6. Positive attitude toward work and learning

Category 2: Behavior Standards

Students will demonstrate the following standards through classroom lessons, activities and/or individual/small-group counseling.

| Learning Strategies | Self Management Skills | Social Skills |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Demonstrate critical-thinking skills to make informed decisions | 1. Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility | 1. Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills |
| 2. Demonstrate creativity | 2. Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control | 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with other students |
| 3. Use time-management, organizational and study skills | 3. Demonstrate ability to work independently | 3. Create relationships with adults that support success |
| 4. Apply self-motivation and self-direction to learning | 4. Demonstrate ability to delay immediate gratification for long-term rewards | 4. Demonstrate empathy |
| 5. Apply media and technology skills | 5. Demonstrate perseverance to achieve long and short-term goals | 5. Demonstrate ethical decision-making and social responsibility |
| 6. Set high standards of quality | 6. Demonstrate ability to overcome barriers to learning | 6. Use effective collaboration and cooperation skills |
| 7. Identify long and short-term academic, career and social/emotional goals | 7. Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem | 7. Use leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse teams |
| 8. Actively engage in challenging coursework | 8. Demonstrate the ability to balance school, home and community activities | 8. Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment |
| 9. Gather evidence and consider multiple perspectives to make informed decisions | 9. Demonstrate personal safety skills | |
| 10. Participate in enrichment and extracurricular activities | 10. Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities | |

Program Components

The components of our program include: responsive services, system support, school counselor/social worker and administrator collaboration and use of data. Descriptions of these components are listed below.

Responsive Services

Responsive services within our program consist of activities that meet the immediate needs of students. These needs or concerns may warrant counseling, consultation, referral, or peer mediation.

- **Consultation:** working with parents, teachers, students and other involved parties to develop strategies to assist students in meeting academic and personal goals.
- **Counseling:** providing a confidential environment in which students can explore concerns, feelings and behaviors in a group or individual setting; topics may include grief, anxiety, family issues, social and relationship issues, behavioral concerns, depression, self-esteem, academic achievement, study skills, student/adult issues and abuse.
- **Crisis Counseling:** providing prevention and intervention; such as counseling is short-term in nature and addresses an immediate concern; topics may include death, suicidal ideation, family crisis, illness, acts of aggression and environmental/community events.
- **Referral:** referring students and their families to appropriate internal and/or external services as needed. Appropriate resources outside of school can be recommended to parents by a school counselor/social worker based on student need. Parents/Staff wishing for a child to be seen by a school counselor/social worker need to submit a referral form which can be obtained from a teacher or a school counselor/social worker.
- **Peer Mediation:** student to student supports to address peer relations and social conflict.
- **Prevention Activities:** formal and informal activities at every level that include topics such as managing emotions, conflict resolution, social awareness, active communication, tobacco/drug prevention and awareness, internet awareness and safety, positive behavior supports and character education.

System Support

System support consists of management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the total school counseling program.

- **Professional Development:** updating knowledge and skills by participating in training, professional meetings, conferences, and relevant coursework.
- **Program Promotion:** providing orientation and information regarding programs to the greater community via websites, newsletters, and community presentations.
- **Teacher and Faculty Consultation:** working with teachers and other faculty members to address the needs of students; participating with committees and in-service programs.
- **Parent and Community Outreach:** providing ongoing support and information to the greater community regarding student needs.
- **Research:** utilizing research in the development of our program.
- **Program Evaluation:** collecting and analyzing data in order to evaluate and update our program.

School Counselor/Social Worker/Administration Collaboration

School counselors/social workers and administrators collaborate regularly regarding responsibilities, expectations, and student outcomes.

Use of Data

Analysis of data drives our program. Data is used for program evaluation to ensure that our program is effective in meeting the needs of the students in our district. Data is also used in monitoring individual student progress to ensure that all students are receiving the support necessary to achieve academic success. Some sources of data used by the team to evaluate individual progress and program efficacy are: demographic data, special education data, standardized test results, high school acceptance data, attendance records, progress monitoring data, curriculum based measurements, progress reports, report cards, behavior charting data, discipline data, suspension reports, RTI (Response to Intervention) services, and needs assessments.

Curriculum

The **School Counseling Program** curriculum consists of structured developmental lessons designed to assist students in achieving the competencies. It is presented systematically to all students in grade K-8 through classroom and group activities. The curriculum is organized to help students acquire, develop, and demonstrate competencies within the three domains.

| Academic | Career | Personal/Social |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kindergarten screening ● Team and Department Meetings ● Administrative Consultation ● Use of data to measure the program and promote systemic change within the school system so every student is ready for to perform at the best of their abilities (state tests, intervention, grades, attendance) ● Instructional Support ● Parent and Teacher Conferences ● Student Support Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High School Transition Planning ● High School Application Process ● Career Planning ● Working Papers ● Learning about careers ● Understanding the link between education and employment ● Interest inventories as a tool for job exploration ● Mock interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Character Education ● Individual Counseling ● Group Counseling ● Positive Behavioral Supports ● Classroom lessons ● Mental health education ● Erin’s law mandated education |

Action Plans

The following pages consist of action plans that demonstrate how the School Counseling Team intends to implement each section of the curriculum. Each plan contains a description of the activity, the data demonstrating a need for it, the time frame in which it is to be completed, the person responsible for delivery, the means of evaluating it and expected results.

| ACADEMIC: Team and Department Meetings | |
|---|---|
| Description | Provides regular support and monitoring for behaviorally at-risk students |
| Data Showing Need | Student grade reports, attendance reports and behavioral data |
| Time Frame | As needed |
| People Responsible | Administration, School Counselors, School Social Workers, Teachers |
| Evaluation | Regular progress report |
| Expected Results | Improved student grades, behavior and/or attendance |

| ACADEMIC: Administrative Consultation | |
|--|--|
| Description | Formal and informal meetings with administrators regarding specific and general issues |
| Data Showing Need | Student grade reports, attendance reports and behavioral data |
| Time Frame | Weekly |
| People Responsible | Administration, School Counselors, Social Workers |
| Evaluation | NA |
| Expected Results | Plan of action to address identified issues |

ACADEMIC: Instructional Support

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Description | A Student Support Team that meets, discusses, monitors and creates action plans for behaviorally and/or academically at-risk students as part of a tier 2 intervention |
| Data Showing Need | Student grade reports, state assessment results, curriculum based measurements, behavioral data, parent/faculty reports and attendance reports |
| Time Frame | Bi-monthly |
| People Responsible | School counselors, administrators, teachers, service providers along with reading/math specialists and parents at a tier 3 level |
| Evaluation | Progress monitoring data |
| Expected Results | Improved student grades, behavior and/or attendance |

ACADEMIC: Parent/Teacher Conferences

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Description | Formal or informal meetings between school personnel and parent/guardian(s) regarding specific issues related to student needs |
| Data Showing Need | Student grade reports, attendance reports, intervention reports, and behavior reports |
| Time Frame | As needed |
| People Responsible | Administration, School Counselors, Social Workers, Teachers, parent/guardian(s) |
| Evaluation | NA |
| Expected Results | Improvement of specific issues addressed in conference |

ACADEMIC: Attendance

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Description | Tracking and intervention for chronic absenteeism. |
| Data Showing Need | Powerschool attendance reports, school to home communication logs, attendance letters, etc. |
| Time Frame | Continuous |
| People Responsible | School Counselors, Social Workers, Administration, Teachers |
| Evaluation | Monthly, yearly data review with goal of reducing absenteeism |
| Expected Results | Improve attendance for all students |

CAREER: High School Application Process

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Description | Individual and classroom assistance to students and families to provide information regarding the high school application process. Additionally, learning about other options for all students, including charter and private schools. |
| Data Showing Need | Student profiles and applications |
| Time Frame | Continuous throughout 6th through 8th grade |
| People Responsible | Middle School Counselor |
| Evaluation | NA |
| Expected Results | High School placements at high achieving schools with most of our students being placed in their first choice school. |

CAREER: High School Transition Planning

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Description | Presentations and information regarding high school options and admittance |
| Data Showing Need | Student grade reports, state assessment results, curriculum based measurements |
| Time Frame | Beginning of 6th grade through 8th grade graduation |
| People Responsible | Middle School Counselor, Teachers, Administration |
| Evaluation | Student grade reports, state assessment results, behavioral data, curriculum based measurements |
| Expected Results | Students' academic success and high school acceptance |

CAREER: Working Papers

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Description | Provide eligible students with proper means to obtain employment |
| Data Showing Need | Student or parent request |
| Time Frame | Continuous |
| People Responsible | Middle School Counselor |
| Evaluation | NA |
| Expected Results | Student employment |

CAREER: Career Planning

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Description | Individual and group educational education to assist students with career planning |
| Data Showing Need | Student interest inventories |
| Time Frame | Continuous |
| People Responsible | School Counselors and Teachers |
| Evaluation | NA |
| Expected Results | Increased career awareness and successful high school planning |

PERSONAL/SOCIAL: Classroom Lessons

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Description | Proactively address various personal and social skills within a classroom setting |
| Data Showing Need | Teacher request and behavioral data |
| Time Frame | Continuous |
| People Responsible | School Counselors |
| Evaluation | Pre/post test and behavioral data |
| Expected Results | Improved school culture and climate |

PERSONAL/SOCIAL: Character Education

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Description | Proactively promote and enhance core virtues established and published in the school handbook |
| Data Showing Need | NA |
| Time Frame | Continuous |
| People Responsible | School Counselors and all faculty/staff |
| Evaluation | Teacher/student/parent reports and behavioral data |
| Expected Results | Improved student behavior and respect for others |

PERSONAL/SOCIAL: Individual Counseling

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Description | Individual, brief/solution focused counseling to assist students with academic, personal and social concerns |
| Data Showing Need | Student, parent, faculty, administrative referrals, 504 plans, IEP's |
| Time Frame | As required throughout school year |
| People Responsible | School Counselors/Social Workers |
| Evaluation | Student, parent, faculty or administrative report or counseling progress summaries |
| Expected Results | Improvement of specific concerns addressed in counseling |

PERSONAL/SOCIAL: Group Counseling

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Description | Group, brief/solution focused counseling to assist students with academic, personal and social concerns |
| Data Showing Need | Student, parent, faculty, or administrative referrals, 504 plans, IEP's |
| Time Frame | As required throughout school year |
| People Responsible | School Counselors/Social Workers |
| Evaluation | Student, parent, faculty or administrative report or counseling progress summaries |
| Expected Results | Improvement of specific concerns addressed in counseling |

PERSONAL/SOCIAL: Behavioral Supports

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Description | A student support team that meets, discusses, monitors and creates action plans for behaviorally at risk students as part of a Tier 2 intervention. |
| Data Showing Need | behavioral data, Teacher and Parent requests |
| Time Frame | Continuous |
| People Responsible | Administration, School Counselors, Social Workers and Teachers |
| Evaluation | Behavioral data, faculty, student and parent report |
| Expected Results | Improved student academic performance and improved school climate |

South Buffalo Charter School Additional Counselor/Social Worker Activities

The Counseling team members have several duties throughout the year that are continuous.

| Service/Activity | Grade Level(s) | Timeline | Staff Involved |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---|
| Before school drop off | All | Daily | School Counselors, Social Workers |
| Coffee with the counselors | parents | monthly | School Counselors, Social Workers |
| Conflict Resolution | All | As needed | School Counselors, Social Workers, Administration |
| Consultation with Parents | All | As needed | School Counselors, Social Workers, Administration |
| Crisis Intervention | All | As needed | School Counselors, Social Workers |
| Fall newsletter | All | October | School Counselors |
| IEP/504 Counseling | All | As needed | Social Workers, Counselors |
| Kindergarten Orientation | K | August | Teachers, Administration, School Counselors |
| Kindergarten Screening | Incoming K students | May/June | Teachers, School Counselors, Social Workers, Administration |
| Lethality Assessments | All | As needed | Social Workers (School Counselors as needed) |
| Mental Health Night | All | October | School Counselors |
| Monitor at risk students | All | Ongoing | School Counselors, Social Workers, Teachers, Administration |
| New Student Lunches | All | September | School Counselors, Social Workers |

| | | | |
|---|-----|-------------------|---|
| Participation in 504/CSE meetings | All | As needed | Social Workers, School Counselors and Teachers |
| Procedure review for counseling referrals | All | September | School Counselors, Social Workers, Administration |
| Proctor state tests | 3-8 | As needed | All staff |
| Referrals to community support agencies | All | As needed | Social Workers, School Counselors |
| Restorative discipline practices | All | As needed | Social Workers, School Counselors |
| Royal Ball | All | June | School Counselors |
| RTI participation | All | As needed | School Counselors, Social Workers, Teachers, Administration |
| Schoolwide events | All | Ongoing | All staff |
| Summer camp newsletter | All | June | School Counselors |
| Thanksgiving and Christmas Drive | All | November/December | School Counselors |
| Update counseling webpage | All | As needed | School Counselors, Social Workers |

References

American School Counselor Association (2014). *Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College-and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student*. Alexandria, VA: Author.