

# *Cliffside Park School District*

## **ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE PROGRAM**

### **GRADES PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SIX**



Revised 2012

**COMPONENTS**  
**OF THE**  
**CLIFFSIDE PARK**  
**ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE PROGRAM**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Cliffside Park School District Elementary Guidance Department is committed to providing all students with the essential elements and skills required to become responsible, productive individuals in society. Guidance and counseling services constitute an integral part of the Cliffside Park School System to assist all students to mature in self-understanding, self-responsibility, decision-making ability, development of values, and attainment of attitudes to help them realize their highest possible potential and develop into worthwhile self-respecting citizens.

Guidance is an on-going developmental process focusing on the total individual at various stages of development- emotional, social, vocational, and physical. It is most effective when it starts with the young child in elementary school and supports the evolution of individuality and potential throughout one's school career. The guidance program is designed to help students understand themselves in relation to their environment and other individuals and to acquire a positive self-image. The services provided assist students in adjusting to problem area situations and can also help them realize their highest possible potential.

An effective guidance program is predicated on several basic concepts that form the foundation for successful implementation. Guidance services are based upon sensitivity to individual differences. The classroom teacher plays an essential role in the guidance program since the teacher is often the first to observe evidence of a student's needs. The school counselor and the classroom teacher, therefore, play an important role in contributing to the students' development of self-understanding and self-direction in the areas of personal/social problems as well as educational and vocational planning.

## **I.STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

Consistent with the district's philosophy of education, guidance counseling concerns itself with the child in the developmental process of maximizing his/her potentials. The guidance counselor works within the educational framework of the child's total environment to enable one to find his/her identity and to learn to make choices and decisions. Many children have problems that inhibit school progress. They need a trained counselor to guide them so that they can be receptive to absorb the school curriculum.

Guidance is of vital importance to cohesively perpetuate a complete educational program. This program may prevent serious problems and may, to some extent, alleviate the need for remedial instruction. We believe that all students have the potential to develop attitudes, skills and behaviors that enable them to become self-directed with the ability to achieve identified goals. We believe all students need to learn and apply decision-making, effective communications, and problem-solving skills.

Several Philosophical Principles include:

- Guidance is based on the recognition of the dignity and worth of the individual and on his/her right to personal assistance in the time of need.
- Guidance is a continuous, sequential, educational process. It is an integral part of education.
- The focus of guidance is on helping the individual realize his/her best self.
- Guidance is the individualizing, the personalizing and the socializing in education.

## **II. VISION STATEMENT**

The goal of the Cliffside Park Elementary Guidance Program is to provide a structured system of educational services to all students and the school community that will enable the students to develop those attitudes, skills, and behaviors necessary in making informed decisions that influence their academic, personal and social development.

The Cliffside Park Elementary Guidance Department strives to recognize the necessity for serving the student in areas other than academic instruction. Guidance services are an integral part of the total educational experience of each student. These services are provided through close cooperation with the teaching and administrative staff. It is important for the counselor to adhere to high ethical standards by providing for the privacy and security of information, reports, and personal data.

The Cliffside Park Elementary Guidance Department endeavors to assist all students to become all that they are capable of becoming and to attain optimal realization of their potentialities and talents. The school counselor is at the center of the guidance program which involves the entire school staff. The counselor, teachers, administrative staff, parents/guardians, and outside resources all work together toward the same goals and all share responsibility for meeting the goals of the educational program. The ultimate goal is for all students to acquire the personal/social, academic, and career skills necessary to reach their fullest potential to become effective lifelong learners, responsible citizens, and productive, satisfied workers in an ever-changing world.

### **III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The elementary school years should function as a time when a student can learn about himself/herself and begin to make good decisions concerning his/her future as a member of the community and as a contributor to society.

Counseling is the prime focus of the elementary counselor's time and skill. Some students' needs are best addressed in individual counseling, or with a combination of individual and group counseling.

The goals and objectives of the Cliffside Park Elementary Guidance and Program include three major domains: Personal/Social, Academic, and Career.

#### **A. Personal/Social Development**

Students will develop the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect themselves and others.

#### **B. Academic Development**

Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

#### **C. Career Development**

Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and make informed career decisions

#### **IV. ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR**

The role of the elementary guidance counselor is to assist students, parents, and staff members in identifying the needs of a student and to suggest options for meeting those needs. The counselor, teacher, administrative staff, and parents must all work together and share responsibility towards meeting the same goals of the educational program. Counselors work closely with classroom teachers who share a key role in the growth and development of students. Administrators provide leadership and support to maintain effective guidance services. Parents facilitate the school-home connection. Mutual cooperation and support are needed for the smooth functioning of the total guidance program. As an agent of change, the guidance counselor's role is to:

- Remain constantly aware of the need to identify remediate, or refer “at-risk” students for poor attendance, underachievement, basic skills, and peer relations
- Help the student achieve a sense of personal competence to make good decisions concerning his/her educational and vocational alternatives.
- Give the student an opportunity to understand the changes in him/her self.
- Show how academic skills may be used in the student's future.
- Demonstrate the importance of time management skills
- Help the student develop a positive self-concept
- Help the student develop effective decision-making strategies
- Attempt to identify and assist the student with learning and behavioral difficulties
- Help the student adjust to and feel more comfortable in the classroom environment
- Help students make a smooth transition to Middle School
- Assist in the distribution, collection, and analysis of test data
- Assist students in the acquisition of skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions

- Work closely with teachers, school personnel, parents, and outside agencies to meet the needs of students
- Counsel small groups and individual students
- Conduct character education class lessons when needed
- Refer students with critical needs, in consultation with their parents, to appropriate community resources
- Advocate for all students
- Help students cope with stress that can have an effect on their academics, specifically test anxiety
- Demonstrate professional conduct and pursue professional growth
- Collaborate with the Child Study Team, specifically as a member of the I&RS Committee
- Respond to students who need immediate, short-term help to deal with a crisis
- Implement and maintain guidance support/lessons including, but not limited to:
  - test-taking strategies
  - organizational skills
  - anger/stress management strategies
  - conflict resolution/peer mediation
  - self-esteem/life skills
  - anti-bullying
  - prevention of harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB)
  - drug/alcohol awareness
  - internet safety
  - career education

## **V. TESTING PROGRAM**

The Cliffside Park District's testing program is designed to provide specific academic information about the elementary student. It is an important part of the elementary guidance program, as these results provide valuable information to the school regarding the placement of students in various programs and the need for support and remediation.

### **Otis-Lenon School Ability Test Eighth Edition (OLSAT 8)**

This test measures cognitive abilities that relate to a students' academic success in school. By assessing a students' verbal, nonverbal, and quantitative ability, OLSAT 8 supplies educators with valuable information to enhance the insights gained from traditional achievement tests.

Administered to students as an individual test, this test evaluates a student's performance on a variety of tasks, including detecting likenesses and differences, recalling words and numbers, defining words, following directions, classifying, establishing sequence, solving arithmetic problems, and completing analogies.

### **New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK)**

In 2003, the Department of Education developed the NJ ASK. This is a comprehensive, multi-grade assessment program intended to be used to identify students who need additional instructional support in order to reach the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS). The CCCS determine what students should know and be able to do at the end of certain grades. This state test is administered to Cliffside Park School District's elementary students in grades three through six and assesses whether the student is acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary for success.

Grade Three Testing-

Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics

Grade Four Testing-

Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science

Grade Five Testing-

Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics

Grade Six Testing-

Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics

## **VI. RESOURCES AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL**

Resources used in the elementary guidance program include:

### **1. School Personnel**

- Principal/Administrative Staff
- Classroom Teacher
- Aides
- Special Education Teacher
- Child Study Team
- Counselors
- School Nurse
- Special Services (ie. Speech, OT, PT, behaviorist, etc.)
- Basic Skills Teacher
- Special Subject Teacher
- ESL Teacher

### **2. Community Agencies**

- Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)
- Family Counseling Services
- Health and Welfare Department
- Care Plus NJ
- Cliffside Park Police Department

## **VII. THE ANTI-BULLYING BILL OF RIGHTS ACT AND THE PREVENTION OF HIB**

On January 5, 2011, the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (P.L.2010, c.122)* was signed into law to strengthen the standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents of harassment intimidation and bullying (HIB) of students that occur on school grounds and off school grounds under specific circumstances. The law was adopted, in part, in response to research on the incidence, prevalence and effects of HIB that has emerged since the adoption of the original HIB law in 2002.

Under the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act*, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) was required to issue guidance for use by parents, students, and school staff in resolving complaints concerning HIB and for the implementation of the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act*. The overall goal is to develop and sustain a safe and civil school environment in which harassment, intimidation, and bullying does not occur. Consistent with this goal, the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* establishes the following requirements to support the school district's overall HIB prevention program:

- HIB Prevention Programs
- HIB Instruction
- Professional Development and Training
- HIB Policy Discussions with Students
- Week of Respect
- Internet Information
- Bullying Prevention Fund

The *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* establishes the following new roles and responsibilities:

- District Anti-Bullying Coordinator
- School Anti-Bullying Specialist
- School Safety Team

