

Nashville School District  
STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM PLAN

This plan articulates the functions served by each of the components of a program of student services. The plan indicates development and implementation for providing student services to all students in the public school system, including area vocational-technical schools.

This plan is building-based (site-based) upon the needs identified by parents, teachers, principals, students and other agencies with which the school district works (such as local Department of Human Services or Department of Health personnel).

This plan ensures coordination of the various student services and could utilize such techniques as differentiated staffing.

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## GUIDANCE, COUNSELING, AND CAREER EDUCATION SERVICES

### 1. Role of School Counselors

The role of school counselors encompasses three areas: counseling, consulting, and coordinating. Counseling is at the heart of the guidance program. The counselor in a helping relationship creates an atmosphere in which mutual respect, understanding, and confidence prevail to allow for growth and resolution of concerns. The general goals of counseling are developing skills of thinking and problem-solving, developing and maintaining a positive self-concept, and helping students set positive goals and exercise self-responsibility.

The school counselor works closely with the teaching and administrative staff so that all the school's resources are directed toward meeting the needs of the individual students. At Nashville School District, at least seventy-five percent (75%) of work time each week is spent providing direct counseling, and no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of work time each week is spent on administrative activities which relate to the provision of guidance services. (ACT 908 of 1991, section 6) The counselor cooperates with other school staff in the early identification, remediation, or referral of children with developmental deficiencies or handicaps. At times it is necessary to go beyond what the school can offer and seek additional aid from outside agencies.

The counselor assists parents in developing realistic perceptions of their child's aptitudes, abilities, interests, attitudes, developmental progress, and personal-social development.

In the role of coordinator, the counselor organizes varied programs and services to meet the unique concerns of the school. Such programs and services may be: classroom guidance, career awareness, student placement, new student orientation, school-wide testing, student achievement, and staff in-service.

## 11. ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS - ASCA

The American School Counselor Association is a professional organization whose members have a unique and distinctive preparation, grounded in behavioral sciences, with training in clinical skills adapted to the school setting. School counselors ascribe to the following basic tenets of the counseling process from which professional responsibilities are derived:

- A. Each person has the right to respect and dignity as a human being and to counseling services without prejudice as to person, character, belief or practice.
- B. Each person has the right to self-direction and self-development.
- C. Each person has the right of choice and the responsibility for decisions reached.
- D. The counselor assists in the growth and development of each individual and uses her/his specialized skills to insure that the rights of the counselee are properly protected within the structure of the school program.
- E. The counselor-client relationship is private. Compliance with all laws, policies, and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality is maintained.
- F. The American School Counselor Association has identified the standards of conduct necessary to maintain and regulate the high standards of integrity and leadership among its members. The Association recognizes the basic commitment of its members to the Ethical Standards for School counselors was developed to complement the AACD standards by clarifying the nature of ethical responsibilities of counselors to the school setting. The purposes of this document are to:
  - 1. Serve as a guide for the ethical practices of all school counselors regardless of level, area, or population served.
  - 2. Provide benchmarks for both self-appraisal and peer evaluation regarding counselor responsibilities to pupils, parents, professional colleagues, school and community, self, and counseling profession

## 111.Responsibilities to Pupils

The school counselor:

- A. Has a primary obligation and loyalty to the pupil, who is treated with respect as a unique individual.
  - B. Is concerned with the total needs of the pupil (educational, vocational, personal, and social) and encourages the maximum growth and development of each counselee.
  - c. Informs the counselee of the purposes, goals, techniques, and rules of procedure under which he/she may receive counseling assistance at or before the counseling relationship is entered. Prior notice includes the possible necessity for consulting with other professionals, privileged communication, and legal or authoritative restraints.
  - D. Refrains from consciously encouraging the counselee's acceptance of values, lifestyles, plans, decisions, and beliefs that represent only the counselor's personal orientation.
  - E. Is responsible for keeping abreast of laws relating to pupils and ensures that the rights of pupils are adequately provided for and protected.
  - F. Makes appropriate referrals when professional assistance can no longer be adequately provided to the counselee. Appropriate referral necessitates knowledge about available resources.
  - G. Protects the confidentiality of pupil records and releases personal data only according to prescribed laws and school policies. The counselor shall provide an accurate, objective, and appropriately detailed interpretation of student information.
  - H. Protects the confidentiality of information received in the counseling process as specified by law and ethical standards.
1. Informs the appropriate authorities when the counselee' s conditions indicated a clear and present danger to the counselee or others. This is to be done after careful deliberation and, where possible, after consultation with other professionals.

J. Provides explanations of nature, purposes, and results of tests in language that is understandable to the client (s).

K. Adheres to relevant standards regarding the selection, administration, and interpretation of assessment techniques.

#### IV. Responsibilities to Parents

The school counselor:

- A. Respects the inherent rights and responsibilities of parents for their children and endeavors to establish a cooperative relationship with parents to facilitate the maximum development of the counselee.
- B. Informs parents of the counselor's role with emphasis on the confidential nature of the counseling relationship between the counselor and the counselee.
- C. Provides parents with accurate, comprehensive, and relevant information in an objective and caring manner.
- D. Treats information received from parents in a confidential and appropriate manner.
- E. Shares information about a counselee only with those persons properly authorized to receive such information.
- F. Follows local guidelines when assisting parents experiencing family difficulties which interfere with the counselee's effectiveness and welfare

## V. Responsibilities to Colleagues and Professional Associates

The school counselor:

- A. Establishes and maintains a cooperative relationship with the faculty for the provision of optimum guidance and counseling services.
- B. Promotes an awareness and adherence to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality, the distinction between public and private information, and staff consultation.
- C. Treats colleague with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith. The qualifications, views, and findings of colleagues are accurately and fairly considered to enhance the image of competent professionals.
- D. Provides professional personnel with accurate, objective, concise, and meaningful data necessary to adequately evaluate, counsel, and assist the counselee.
- E. Is aware of and fully utilizes professionals and organizations to whom the counselee may be referred.



## VI. Responsibilities to the School and Community

The school counselor:

- A. Supports and protects the educational program against any infringement not in the best interest of pupils.
- B. Informs appropriate officials of conditions that may be potentially disruptive or damaging to the school's mission, personnel, and property.
- C. Delineates and promotes the counselor's role and function in meeting the needs of those served. The counselor will notify appropriate school officials of conditions which may limit or curtail their effectiveness in providing services.
- D. Assists in the development of (1) curricular and environmental conditions appropriate for the school and community, (2) educational procedures and programs to meet pupil needs, and (3) a systematic evaluation process for guidance and counseling programs, services, and personnel.
- E. Works cooperatively with agencies, organizations, and individuals in the school and community in the best interest of counselees and without regard to personal reward or remuneration.

## VII. Responsibilities to Self

The school counselor:

- A. Functions within the boundaries of individual professional competence and accepts responsibility for the consequences of his/her actions.
- B. Is aware of potential effects of personal characteristics on services to clients.
- C. Monitors personal functioning and effectiveness and refrains from any activity likely to lead to inadequate professional services or harm to a client.
- D. Strives through personal initiative to maintain professional competence and keep abreast of innovations and trends in the profession.

## VIII Principles of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

Guidance services in the Nashville School District are viewed as an integral part of the total educational process. A successful school program is based upon the knowledge and recognition of developmental needs of the school-age child. Consistent with this understanding, guidance services in the Nashville School District emphasize programs which are developmental in nature. The program is for all students, has an organized and planned curriculum, is sequential and flexible, is an integrated part of the total educational process, involves all school personnel, helps students learn more effectively and efficiently, and includes counselors who provide specialized counseling services and interventions (Myrick, 1987).

The developmental guidance program, while recognizing and incorporating the remedial function of helping teachers with "problem" children, defines a broader objective of helping teachers work with all children in learning appropriate life adjustment behaviors. However, changes in behavior will only occur when the child perceives, either cognitively or conatively, that a modification of his behavior will be personally rewarding or self-enhancing.

It is felt that a program which is preventive in nature, including such areas as decision-making and awareness of self and others, will enable children to make satisfactory school and life adjustments. Therefore, guidance interventions with young children are implemented with the hope of preventing serious problem minimizing the size of such problems, if and when they do occur. Some of the activities and services provided are preventive classroom guidance activities, individual and group counseling, referrals to community agencies, consultation with teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders, crisis intervention, assessment, placement, and follow-up services.

IX School Counselors are Involved in the Following:

A. Small Group Guidance and Classroom Guidance

The Nashville School District's comprehensive school program involves planned guidance activities for all students. These age-related exercises foster student's academic, personal, and social growth.

Group counseling is an invaluable part of most school counselors' work. Working with students in groups acknowledges that peer influence is an extremely powerful factor in students' development. Groups provide them with an opportunity to give and receive feedback which contributes to their understanding of themselves and others. It also allows them to practice interpersonal and personal skills in a safe, reinforcing environment. In addition, a group approach enables counselors to have an impact on a greater number of students, thereby making the most efficient use of his/her time.

The classroom guidance curriculum focuses on topics such as: self-understanding, effective interpersonal and communication skills (such as problem-solving, decision making, conflict resolution), effective study skills and positive attitudes toward school, career awareness and the world of work, substance abuse prevention, acceptance of differences in people (racial, gender, cultural, religious, and physical), and issues involving child endangerment.

Nashville School District provides five counselors. Each counselor is at their designated school every day and provides classroom guidance activities as necessary and as appropriate.

## Individual Counseling

A group approach is not best suited for every student or situation. Some students or situations would benefit most from individual counseling. The nature of some requires more confidentiality than a small group or classroom guidance. Some students may have difficulty in relating to their peer or may be overwhelmed in group situations, or need individual attention.

Students have access to the counselor on an individual basis in order that they have an opportunity to discuss in private personal growth and areas of concern. The counselor helps the student strive to reach his/her goals and resolve his/her personal conflicts or concerns.

Referrals for individual counseling may be made by parents, teachers, administrators, other school personnel, or self-referral. Emergency referrals include, but are not limited to: suspected child abuse (physical or mental), any behavior change which is sudden or unusual, traumatic family experiences, or indications of mounting hostility between child and teacher or peer group.

Children who exhibit the following behaviors may lead to referral:

(1) seem to seek only negative attention, (2) cry often or get sick daily, (3) exhibit aggressive behavior, (4) are unable to follow the rules, (5) are entering new or special learning classes, (6) are having difficulty with special relationships, (7) are fearful or nervous, (8) are having learning difficulties, (9) are unable to resolve a peer conflict, (10) are underachieving, and (11) are habitually untruthful.

## C. Consultation

Consultation in the school counseling program focuses on the total learning environment of the school. Counselors serve as a resource for teachers concerning specific student's problems & on general issues (Myrick, 1987.) A major part of the counselor's role is to collaborate with teachers and parents, not to criticize them. Counselors can provide support and encouragement to teachers and parents who may be feeling frustrated, discouraged, overwhelmed, or unappreciated.

Counselors work with teachers and administrators to help create the kind of school environments that stimulate growth and learning. Their emphasis is

on making the educational process more personal and increasing teachers' and administrators' understanding of the importance of fostering acceptance of and valuing individual differences in learning styles and rates of learning; how adults' expectations, biases, and behaviors affect students; and ways of helping students cope with success and failure.

Consultation involves:

- 1) Assisting teachers in working with individual students or groups of students.
- 2) Providing relevant materials and resources to teachers, especially relating to classroom guidance curriculum.
- 3) Assisting in the identification and development of programs for students with special needs.
- 4) Participating in school committees that address substance abuse, gifted and talented education, curriculum development, coordination of each grade level, and school accreditation.
- 5) Interpreting student information, such as results of standardized tests for students and team members.
- 6) Consulting regularly with other specialists (e.g., psychologists and representatives from community agencies.)

#### D.Coordination

Counselors coordinate the following:

- \* Assist parents in gaining access to services for their children through a referral to agencies
- \* Plan, coordinate, and evaluate the guidance program's effectiveness
- \*Coordinate the school's testing program, which includes interpreting test results to parents students, and school personnel.
- \*Serve as liaison between the school, home, and community agencies so that efforts to help students are successful and reinforced rather than duplicated.

## E. Working with Parents & Parental Involvement

Parental involvement includes school open houses, school notes, progress reports,

Report cards, Parent-Teacher conferences, meetings with individual parents for specific concerns, access to resources which include a parent center at each building, and information provided on district website as well as social media from each building.

Parents need to become aware of the role of the school counselor and how to obtain the services available. To achieve this goal, parents are provided with information from each building's counselor concerning services provided by the school counselor. Parents of new students who transfer to the district during the school year are also provided information.

The school counselor offers consultation with parents concerning:

- \*Techniques for helping their children meet academic, personal, and social potential
- \* Development of study habits
- \* Explanations concerning the value of testing
- \*Techniques for helping the student do well on testing
- \*Disaggregation of the student's test results (Benchmarks)
- \*Counteracting negative peer pressure
- \*Preventing substance abuse
- \*Coping with divorce
- \*Managing disruptive behavior

E. Working with Parents & Parental Involvement

Parental involvement includes school open houses, school notes, progress reports,

Report cards, Parent-Teacher conferences, meetings with individual parents for specific concerns. Several times a year newsletters go home with the children.

At Nashville Junior High, the counselor has been appointed as facilitator of the Parental Involvement Plan at the school. She is responsible for overseeing the school's plan, which includes the training of staff, surveying of parents, students and staff, and coordinating the activities of the plan.

Parents need to become aware of the role of the school counselor and how to obtain the services available. To achieve this goal, parents are provided with a brochure during the first months of school which provides information about the guidance program. Parents of new students who transfer to the district during the school year are also provided brochures. (See Appendix D for brochure.) Kindergarten students' parents attend an orientation to school, hosted by the school counselor, in which the counselor also explains his/her role in the school environment.

The school counselor offers consultation with parents concerning:

1. Techniques for helping their children meet academic, personal, and social potential
2. Development of study habits
3. Explanations concerning the value of testing
4. Techniques for helping the student do well on testing
5. Disaggregation of the student's test results (Benchmarks)
6. Counteracting negative peer pressure
7. Preventing substance abuse
8. Coping with divorce, and
9. Managing disruptive behavior
- 10.

## F. Peer Facilitation

Students often share their problems with peers rather than adults.

Counselors provide structured opportunities for students to serve as peer helpers. The power of peer influence cannot be minimized and, in fact, should be capitalized upon- Recent research shows that both peer facilitators and the students they are matched with benefit from the relationship. Peer facilitation is utilized within the classroom guidance sessions to augment decision-making and problem-solving skills.

## G. Referral to Outside Agencies

Counselors establish and maintain close working relationships with staff of a variety of school and community agencies. These agencies include departments of health and social services, mental health centers, juvenile courts, and advocacy groups. To help students and their families cope with an array of problems, counselors identify school and community resources and establish policies and procedures for interagency communication.

Some agencies available in our area for referrals are: Arkansas Counseling and Psychodiagnostics, Cornerstone Counseling Services, Easter Seals, Southwest Counseling and Mental Health, Arkansas Children's Hospital, Lion's Club, Rotary of Nashville, CASA, and Burlsworth Foundation.

Arkansas state law requires schools to cooperate with and provide access to Department of Human Services staff.

Some typical tasks that counselors may be involved with while helping students and their families gain access to the services they need include:

1. Referring students and parents with special needs to resources in and outside the school
2. Maintaining contacts with outside resources
3. Developing, publishing, and distributing a list of community resources, referral agencies, and hotlines
4. Following up on referrals



## H. Assessment and Testing

The Nashville School District counselors are the building test coordinators for the school. Duties include teacher in-service, inventory of testing materials, distribution of materials, test security procedures and documentation, and return shipment of materials as necessary. The counselor is also responsible for make-up testing and makes maximum effort to provide make-up testing for all students.

Counselors interpret test scores for parents, students, teachers, and school personnel to assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses of particular students, groups of students, or curriculum.

Counselors use a variety of assessment instruments to identify the social/emotional needs of students and make recommendations to teachers based on these assessments.

### 1.Specialized Populations and Needs

The school counselor's guidance activities include those which promote student's and school personnel's acceptance of differences in students which are due to culture or disabilities.

The counselor's activities can promote:

1. Students' and school personnel's acceptance of differences
2. Policies, procedures, and behaviors that reflect freedom from stereotypes
3. Examination of schools' testing programs to ensure that they reflect equitable standards for all students
4. Outreach to parents and families of students from culturally diverse populations.

The counselor has access to confidential records including psychological/psycho-educational evaluations.

## Orientation

Orientation is a process to acquaint students, parents, and staff with the services of the guidance department and other student services offered to assist in the adjustment of new students to a school. Orientation is designed to help students make affective transition adjustments from one

school setting to another.

This accomplished through group guidance activities in the classroom, teacher in-service, and brochures and meetings for parents. Counselors are also available to speak to Parent-Teacher groups to introduce guidance services and curriculum.

#### K. Academic Advisement for Class Selection

At the K-6 level, counselors assist in the placement of students in homeroom groups. Homeroom groups are established to promote a heterogeneous grouping of students in each homeroom.

Class scheduling is a cooperative effort which involves classroom teachers, fine arts teachers, remedial teachers, gifted and talented teachers, special education teachers, administrators, and counselors. Guidance classes are scheduled by the counselor to involve all students. Scheduling efforts strive to create the least interruption to the learning environment.

#### L. Utilization of Student Records

Cumulative files are maintained in each building's office. The counselor has full access to these files and any other files kept by the district for guidance and other related services.

#### X. Career Awareness and Planning in School Counseling Programs

Career development includes: 1) helping students to understand the value of working 2) helping students relate interests to career choices 3) helping students to relate school performance to job choice and success.

## XI. Recommended Facilities for the Guidance Program

Facilities required for a school guidance program are functions of students' characteristics and needs, program goals and objectives, staffing and scheduling, grouping of students for specific purposes, the use of a variety of materials and procedures, the need for privacy for counseling, and the need for security of restricted materials and student records.

Counselors are provided a private office, which has adequate floor space, heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting. There is an outer reception area and more than adequate storage provided. Security measures include locking outer doors, locking filing cabinets, and a phone line. Individual counseling and small conferences are held in the counseling offices. Group guidance is conducted in individual classrooms.

Guidance facilities are near but separate from the administrative offices. They are in the flow of student traffic, near the source of supply of students, and near restrooms.

## XII. School Counselor/Pupil Ratio from Standards for Accreditation

Each school district shall provide access in the elementary and secondary school to certified guidance counselors. State guidelines stipulate the counselor/pupil ratio schoolwide shall be not less than one counselor for every four hundred fifty students.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

### I. Evaluations

The district provides an evaluation for students with learning or adjustment problems and evaluation of students in exceptional child education programs. Psycho-educational testing is provided on a contractual basis by a licensed or certified examiner.

### II. Consultations

The district provides consultation and counseling with parents, students, and school personnel.

### 111. Early Identification

\*Pre-school services are provided through DeQueen Mena Education Service Cooperative. Transition from this service to Kindergarten allows for referral, temporary placement, or placement of school-aged students in special education.

\*The district provides a system for the early identification of learning potential and factors which affect the child's educational performance. Kindergarten screening using the Early Prevention of School Failure evaluation tool is provided for all students prior to Kindergarten entrance. As of the fall of 2004, the state has mandated the use of the Iowa Early Learning Inventory to help make instructional decisions about students in the building.

### IV. Liaison and Referrals

Referral to outside agencies are made, as necessary, in coordination with the Special Education supervisor. Some of these may include: 1) referral to audiologist, 2) referral to doctor, 3) referral for Occupational/Physical

### Policies Ensuring Ethical Procedures

Policies which ensure ethical procedures regarding psychological activities are under the direction of the Special Education Supervisor.

## VISITING TEACHER & SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

### I. Description

The Nashville School District does not fund the position of social worker. Other agencies which do work for the welfare of the students are the Department of Human Services, Hotline services, privately funded mental health agencies, and the Arkansas State Police. These persons seek to enhance the coping capabilities of people and to change environmental conditions that impact people.

A clothing room, school supply program and a Christmas aide program is available through the school. Students who have needs beyond the purview of the local school are referred to outside agencies.

II These persons provide casework to assist in the prevention and remediation of problems of attendance, behavior, adjustment, and learning.

### III. Liaison between Home and School

In the absence of a school social worker, the guidance counselor serves as a liaison between the school and community social services. She informs the principal of the school of all actions taken.

## OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES

At each school level, these services include the dissemination of career education information by classroom teachers and the guidance counselor as developmentally appropriate.

## GROUP CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICES & ANTI-BULLYING ACTIVITIES

### Description

These services include educational and social programs which help students develop skills which enable them to resolve differences and conflicts between individuals and groups. Programs are designed to promote understanding and positive communication.

## Activities

Activities for students include dealing constructively with conflict, building positive self-esteem, respecting human differences, making responsible decisions, coping with frustrations and anger, and developing positive interpersonal skills.

### 111. Anti-Bullying Description & Policy for the School Activities & Programs for Anti-Bullying at School

Act 681 of 2003 requires school districts to adopt anti-bullying policies to prevent pupil harassment, also known as "bullying," and shall file with the Department of Education a copy of the policies adopted.

## IV. Alternative Methods of Classroom Management

The main method of classroom management used at Nashville School District is Assertive Discipline. Students are taught that their misbehavior will result in increasing levels of discipline the more times they disobey the rules. For most students, this form of classroom management works. For those students having more difficulty, behavioral contracting, dispute resolution of behavior modification plans are used.

## AT-RISK STUDENTS

### 1. At-Risk Definition

At-risk children are those enrolled in school whose progress toward graduation, school achievement, preparation for employment, and futures as productive workers and citizens are jeopardized by a variety of health, social, educational, familial, and economic factors. They are the children with special needs who are underserved, categorized, ignored, unchallenged, and for whom expectations are low.

### II. Characteristics of Youth-at-Risk

School records are maintained which facilitate identification of at-risk students. At each school level, the following factors are considered:

- \*Excessive absenteeism or irregular attendance
- \*Poor or failing grades
- \*Low math and reading scores
- \*Retention in at least one grade
- \*Lack of participation in school and extracurricular activities

Dissatisfaction with teachers and traditional school structure

- \*Failure to see relevance of education to personal desires
  - \*Learning disabled or handicapped
  - \*Uncooperative, inattentive, and unmotivated
  - \*Suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary actions
  - \*Feelings of rejection, alienation, isolation, insecurity, and inadequacy
  - \*Association with disaffected peer group
  - \*Low and unhealthy self-esteem/self-concept
  - \*Poor decision making skills
  - \*Health problems
  - \*Delinquency
    - \*Family disturbances
    - \*Racial or ethnic minority
  - \*Low socio-economic background
  - \*Parent(s) or sibling(s) not completing school
  - \*Lack of parental emphasis on importance of education
  - \*Frequent moves
  - \*Poor communication between school and home
-

## ALTERNATIVE STUDENT SERVICES

### I. Types of Personnel

- Volunteers, Outside Agencies
- Paraprofessionals
- Physical/Occupational Therapist
- Speech Pathologist
- Reading Recovery Teacher/Enrichment
- English as a Second Language Instructor
- Migrant Director

Personnel employed or serving students on a voluntary basis under this section shall be limited to performing those services for which they are licensed, certified, or trained.

### III. Description of Services

Volunteers provide a variety of services which help students achieve and take pride in themselves and their school. Volunteers will read to students, participate in special celebration days, chaperone and perform other services. Volunteers will conduct lessons for Family and Consumer Science classes on budgets and household expenses and will also help with teaching students how to preserve foods. The Attorney General's office will conduct classes regarding cyber bullying and will provide materials to be distributed to the students. Classes have agencies throughout the year that come to provide presentations on various topics.

- Paraprofessionals — The school district employs individuals to work directly with at-risk students.



- Physical/Occupational Therapist — Services are provided on a contractual basis.
- Speech Pathologist —Nashville School District contacts with certified speech pathologist.
- English as a Second Language Instructor — Nashville School District provides instruction to ELL students in an appropriate manner. WE also have paraprofessionals available who speak Spanish to provide any additional help with communication with parents if needed
- Migrant Director oversees aspects of the Migrant Program.

## SCHOOL SUICIDE CRISIS & TERRORIST PLANS

The General Assembly of the Arkansas Legislature (Act 1757 of 2005) finds that youth suicide is a serious problem that: Takes the life of a youngster who has only begun to live; and can be prevented with suicide intervention strategies. The General Assembly also recognizes that suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four and the fourth leading cause of death for persons between the ages of ten and fourteen.

School suicide/crisis program plans should include a distribution of a suicide prevention public awareness program developed for distribution by the Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force. The task force has established a proposed model school response plan to youth suicide/crisis as distributed by the AR Youth Suicide Prevention Commission. It should include plans for crisis events that can be extraordinary and cannot be predicted. However, the human reactions to a crisis are consistent and very predictable. Being aware of and understanding beforehand how people will react in a critical situation make it possible to implement a plan that defuses those reactions and prevents them from precipitating a secondary crisis.

The Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force shall: Assist in increasing the awareness of youth suicide among school personnel and community leaders; Enhance the school climate and relationships between teachers, counselors, and students to encourage everyone to recognize the signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts about youth suicide; Encourage the development and implementation of school-based youth suicide prevention programs and pilot projects; Utilize community resources in the development and implementation of youth suicide prevention programs through cooperative efforts; Increase the awareness of students of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and youth suicide; Advocate for programs to collect data on youth suicide attempts; and Develop a program of suicide prevention for distribution to the schools of the State of Arkansas. A program was designed in 2008 and shared throughout the state by Arkansas Gatekeeper to heighten awareness about suicide in Arkansas; provide knowledge about the risk and protective factors, warning signs and clues of suicidal behaviors; teach skills to intervene with suicidal youth; and provide helpful resources. Key Concepts are: Youth suicide is a significant problem in our state. Many suicides are preventable if we can recognize the warning signs and respond with specific intervention skills. The three most important ways to intervene are: show you care, ask about suicide and go for help. There are resources for youth in crisis. Objectives are: define suicidal behaviors, distinguish between facts and myths about youth suicide, understand the risk factors for suicidal behaviors, recognize warning signs, demonstrate the helpful intervention strategies and identify resources at school and in the community. ■

Nashville School District has provided information in the form of professional development to faculty, students, administrators, parents, and community groups. A letter from our superintendent is available on the district website to bring awareness for the need of services for struggling students.

#### A. Inclusive School Crisis Plan

The School Crisis Building Plan should be inclusive to address any type of suicide, terrorist or crisis in general.

#### B. School Crisis Team List

Establish a crisis team for each building on a school campus. It is suggested that it be composed of at least two teachers, a school administrator (serving as chairperson), a school nurse, a school counselor, a secretary, and a mental health professional.

#### C. Specialized Training Activities for School Community

The crisis team should receive specialized training in dealing with crisis situations. • It is suggested the development and training of a crisis team be done jointly with school personnel and mental health professionals from the local community.

#### D. Referral Process to School Crisis Team

An at-risk student can be self-referred or referred by another student or a friend, parent, neighbor, teacher, or other school personnel to the crisis team for assessment.

#### E. Assessment, Forms & Processes Used by School Crisis Team

The crisis team should be ready to make assessments, be ready to adapt the plan to fit the crisis, and deal with the aftermath of a crisis.

#### F. Dealing with Specific Areas of Crisis

Crisis counseling should be made available to deal with the effects of trauma on the students, perceptions of death, short- and long-term effects, understanding grief, grief counseling, post traumatic stress disorder, and preventing post traumatic stress disorder.

#### G. Plan for Safety of Students & Employees in a Terrorist Attack

Most suicide threats and attempts as well as other crisis situations occur after school hours and off campus. School personnel are often perceived as important personal resources by students and their parents. For this reason school personnel may be called upon at home and after hours to help in a crisis. It is most important that formal guidelines for handling such emergencies be made available to, and followed by, School personnel. Doing so will ensure that these after-hour emergencies are handled effectively.

Act 648 of 2003 requires school districts to develop a plan on or before January 1, 2004 to provide for the safety of students and employees in the event of a terrorist attack, specifically including contingency plans for attacks using biological agents, the use of nerve gas, or similar chemical agents, affecting the school and in the event of war affecting the school.

#### H. Ongoing Training & Changes

There should be ongoing training for the crisis team as well as faculty and students in handling crisis situations. The crisis plan should be reviewed annually in light of all experiences and new developments in the field of suicide/crisis prevention/postvention and new case laws as they emerge. Modifications should be made accordingly.