



Cache County School District

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



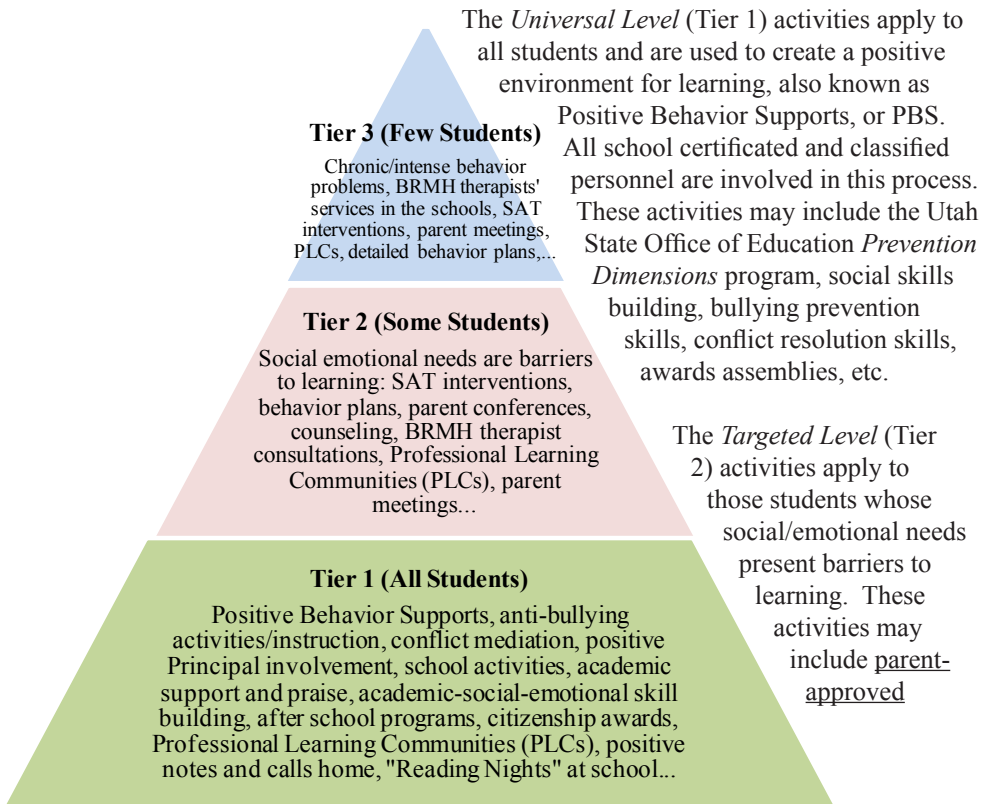
Cache County School District

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Cache County School District (hereafter known as the District or CCSD) is committed to using research-based programs and practices to assist children in meeting higher academic standards. Expanding our current counseling services to include six elementary schools through a federally funded grant is vital to helping schools carry out their mission to educate all of their students. The six elementary schools included in this grant are: Canyon, Lewiston, Lincoln, Millville, Park, and Summit.

The grant began on October 1, 2011, and is expected to be funded through the 2013-2014 school year. The funding is provided by the Office of Safe and Healthy Students, United States Department of Education.

Both the district's Student Mental Health Services and the Elementary Counseling Program use a national three-tiered, pyramid-shaped mental health service approach: Universal Level (Tier 1, or base of the pyramid), Targeted Level (Tier 2, or middle of the pyramid), and Intensive Level (Tier 3, or top of the pyramid). (see image on facing page)



services from the school counselor, Student Assistance Team recommendations (SAT, which is a team of teachers and others who meet to discuss ways to better assist students regarding behavior and academics), specific student behavior plans, parent/teacher/principal meetings, etc.

The *Intensive Level* (Tier 3) activities are individualized to assist those students with chronic and/or intense behavior problems. These activities may include parent-approved services from the school counselor, parent-approved services from a Bear River Mental Health therapist, detailed behavior plans, SAT recommendations, etc.

Foundation of the Elementary School Counseling Grant Program

The foundation of the elementary school counseling grant consists of the beliefs and the philosophy which guide the program. The foundation is the “what” of the program. We believe that our counselors should spend the majority of their time counseling students or in other activities directly related to the counseling process.

Since our counselors work with all aspects of the national three-tier model, they are involved in school-wide positive behavior support activities across the grade levels. They are also involved in building social skills through a variety of programs such as the *Prevention Dimensions* program (see <http://schools.utah.gov/utahpd/> to learn more about *Prevention Dimensions*).

Though each school’s mission statement varies somewhat in wording and process, the end goal of each school’s mission is to help each student function effectively in a global, technological society as competent, productive, caring, and responsible individuals. These mission statements are also in compliance with those of the Cache County School District mission statement.

The goal and mission, therefore, of the elementary school counseling program is to help all students achieve these same goals.

Delivery System

The delivery system describes the activities, interactions, and methods necessary to deliver the program.

Guidance Curriculum—Our primary guidance curriculum is based on the Utah State Office of Education’s *Prevention Dimensions*. The curriculum is designed to strengthen students’ social, emotional, and academic skills. Our counselors have been trained in this curriculum and are available to present the material in classrooms throughout the schools. Other research-based programs will be used as determined appropriate by the counselors and the school principal. Our counselors, in conjunction with Bear River Mental Health Services, also present parenting education classes on an as-needed basis.

Individual Student Planning—Our counselors assist students in planning, monitoring, and managing personal development (organizational, behavioral, social, study skills, etc.).

Responsive Services—This part of the delivery system is where the counselors dedicate the majority of their time. It is responding to students who have concerns that need to be addressed immediately. This can be done in an intervention or prevention format. It should be noted that school counselors address immediate student concerns and assist students anyway they can; counselors, however, are *not* mental health therapists. School counselors are not trained to provide intensive, long-term therapy.

Counselors do provide short-term individual counseling as needed, small group counseling, crisis counseling, consultation with staff and outside agencies, referrals to other services as needed, and interventions and other mediations as necessary. Counselors also work closely with the school's Student Assistance Team (SAT) in finding appropriate interventions for students in need.

Children will not receive regular counseling services without parent permission.

Systems Support—A school counseling program requires administration and management to establish, maintain, and enhance the total counseling program. Our elementary counseling program falls under the supervision of the district's Office of Student Mental Health Services. Counselors and Student Mental Health staff meet on a regular basis to discuss program needs, ways to improve elementary counseling services, and program accomplishments. Student Mental Health staff also maintain communication with the schools' principals regarding program needs in their schools.

Management System

The management system helps ensure that the elementary counseling program clearly defines the roles of the counselors and the services they provide.

Agreements—Our district has entered into an agreement with Bear River Mental Health Services to provide licensed therapists for the six elementary schools. They work with the elementary counselors to provide necessary services to children. The Bear River Health Department also has agreed to provide assistance on an as-needed basis, especially in the area of the *Prevention Dimensions Program*. Additionally, the elementary counseling staff, school faculties, and district Student Mental Health Services staff agree to adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) National Framework Model for school counseling programs.

No-Cost Bear River Mental Health Services—All therapy services provided by the Bear River Mental Health Services to students in your school are done so at no cost to the family. Funding for these services is provided by the Elementary School Counseling grant. The school principal, typically with input from the school counselor, determines the best use of the therapist's time.

Advisory Council—The District Student Mental Health Executive Committee acts as the advisory council for the Elementary School Counseling Program. There is representation from parents, teachers, counselors, school psychologists, and school and district administration. It reviews policies, procedures, and recommends ways to enhance services for students in both the Student Mental Health and Elementary Counseling Programs.

Use of Data—The District recognizes the importance of implementing programs and policies that are research-based, data-driven, and that follow best practices grounded in nationally recognized programs. The Elementary Counseling Program utilizes data from behavioral referrals to the office; student, parent, teacher, and principal input; Power School data; elementary counselor observations and input; student needs assessments; and recommendations from the District Student Mental Health Executive Committee. Furthermore, the District uses the research findings from the American School Counselor Association for guiding principles and practices in elementary school counseling.

Action Plans—Action plans provide an outline describing how the desired results of the counseling program will be achieved, including the activities/competencies that are addressed, a description of the activity, the data used to assess the level of achievement, a timeline in which the activity is to be completed, who is responsible for the delivery of the activity, means of evaluating student success, and expected results for the program participants (students, parents, etc.). Action Plans for the Elementary School Counseling Grant include:

1. Demonstrating a 30% decrease in office behavior referrals at each school over the course of the grant.
2. Confirming that the counselors are spending a majority of their time directly counseling students or are involved in other activities directly related to the counseling process, e.g. social skills groups, parent meetings, faculty meetings, counseling-related lunch time activities, etc.
3. Creation of a CCSD Elementary School Counseling Model, as well as a Policies, Procedures, and Programming Manual.
4. Training teachers and staff to recognize, respond to, and refer children at-risk for mental health issues, including school-based early identification and referral processes. This goal has been accomplished through faculty and staff training provided by the District's Student Mental Health Services.
5. Training of school counselors on appropriate identification and early intervention techniques and best practices.
6. Providing individual student counseling for mental health concerns, including parent consultations and referrals to appropriate area agencies.
7. Conducting student support groups to provide struggling students with additional, intensive support and skills training.
8. Offering family therapy groups to provide parents with skills to facilitate their child's social-emotional-behavioral development.
9. Providing more intensive school-based mental health services to high-need students through Bear River Mental Health therapists.

10. Providing “Wrap-Around” services (multiple mental health service agencies to assist a student) as needed.
11. Identifying and establishing partnerships with other qualified area agencies, including those that work closely with diverse populations.
12. Providing school and district newsletter updates (including school and district websites) in English and Spanish.
13. Providing for continuous review of the counseling program by the District Student Mental Health Executive Committee.
14. Providing counseling program-based presentations and updates to various community agencies, especially the Northern Utah Substance Abuse Prevention Team (a cooperating group of many community service agencies).
15. Collecting evaluation data for the enhancement of the counseling program’s services to children.

Use of Time—The CCSD Elementary School Counseling Program follows the recommendations of the American School Counselor Association in virtually all aspects of the implementation of services to our children, including the use of time. Our counselors spend at least 80% of their time in direct service, or contact, with students. Their duties are specifically focused on program delivery and direct counseling services.

Use of Calendars—Our counselors maintain a master calendar of counseling services and activities for each of their schools. This process is designed to keep students, parents, teachers, and administrators informed of program activities and events. It further assists in planning and helps ensure active participation of all those involved in the counseling program.

Accountability

The counselors and support staff collect and use data that connect the program to student achievement. The District utilizes an outside assessment and audit agency for all of its grants to help ensure accurate and detailed data collection results.

Results Reports—The District utilizes these types of reports because they help ensure that processes and activities are carried out and that the results can be analyzed for effectiveness and modified as necessary. Results reports include feedback data from counselor, principal, teacher, parent, and district support staff observation of program services, as well as counseling service results data that are based on student progress. Immediate, intermediate, and long-range results are collected and analyzed for program improvement.

School Counselor Performance Standards—The District’s Elementary School Counselor Program standards and objectives provide counselors with guidance to do the following:

1. Work with school leadership, the Student Assistance Team (SAT), and School Community Councils to keep these stakeholders informed of the counseling program's progress, and demonstrate ongoing assessment to meet all assigned students' needs and revise where necessary.
2. Demonstrate positive interpersonal relationship skills with students, parent/guardians, school faculties, and staff members.
3. Develop materials and instructional strategies to meet student needs and school goals.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of instructional strategies and effective classroom management techniques.
5. Regularly work with faculties and staff members to develop rapport and encourage involvement with program activities and procedures, thereby aiding in effective implementation of the school counseling program.
6. Guide individuals and groups of students and their parents/guardians through the development of personal, educational, and career plans.
7. Provide research-based effective individual counseling, small group counseling, and parenting skills classes.
8. Demonstrate effective communication skills with parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and others involved with program services.
9. Implement an effective referral process with administrators, teachers, and other school personnel for services and resources within the school system and provide a link to outside counseling-related agencies with parent/guardian approval.
10. Rely on data to guide counseling program direction, emphasis on services, revisions of program as needed, and service intervention for students.
11. Demonstrate effective strategies supporting a positive school environment.
12. Demonstrate a commitment to professional standards: work effectively with faculty and staff, adhere to the American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards, adhere to District policy and support and participate in the Student Assistance Team referral and related processes.

Program Audit—As mentioned earlier, the District uses an outside evaluation and audit agency to monitor and evaluate all district grants, including the Elementary School Counseling grant. Additionally, the District's Student Mental Health Services support staff monitors the program's progress on a regular basis. Our elementary school counselors also submit a monthly report to the District detailing how they have spent their time that month, as well as a description of the counseling activities and projects in which they have been involved.

Contact Information

If you wish to refer your child for counseling services or if you have questions about the counseling program, please feel free to e-mail or call your counselor. The e-mail addresses and school phone numbers are listed below:

Counselor Teresa Handy (e-mail address: teresa.handy@ccsdut.org) serving Lewiston Elementary (258-2923), Park Elementary (258-2344), Summit Elementary (563-6269)

Counselor Josh Tanner: (e-mail address: joshua.tanner@ccsdut.org) serving Canyon Elementary (792-7684), Lincoln Elementary (245-6442), Millville Elementary (752-7162)

This brochure is paid for from a grant provided by the Office of Safe and Healthy Students, United States Department of Education.

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Cache County School District*



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