

Malvern School District

Student Services Plan

revised October 2018



In accordance with Act 908 of 1991 and Arkansas Department of Education Rules and Regulations for Public Schools, this document will serve as the required Student Services Plan of Action for the Malvern School District.

Malvern School District Mission Statement

The primary goal of the Malvern School District is to ensure that each student is properly educated for the 21st Century, to passionately lead staff and students in the teaching and learning process, and to provide an atmosphere conducive to optimal learning for all students and staff.

Each building or school in the Malvern School District also has a mission statement that directly addresses the needs of their students and staff. Mission statements are revisited and/or updated annually to meet the changing and specific needs of our students. Each school's primary goal or mission will be tied to the district mission statement in terms of providing an optimal education plan for the 21st Century.

Guidance Mission Statement

The mission of the Malvern School District guidance department is to provide students and staff a safe environment where they can share feelings and concerns, can learn to communicate, and can make responsible decisions. While respecting individual uniqueness and multicultural diversity, opportunities will be provided to enhance the three domains of Academic, Career, and Professional/Social Development.

Guidance Philosophy

The Malvern School District counseling program is designed to recognize the potential and uniqueness of each student. The student's growth and learning are developmental; therefore, guidance must be comprehensive, developmental, and sequential. This process begins at birth and continues throughout life. All members of the school staff are part of the educational guidance team; therefore, guidance is the responsibility of the total school staff. The counselor serves as a consultant and resource person with specialized knowledge and expertise.

Core Beliefs

Acquiring Knowledge of Self and Others

- Students should acquire skills to understand and accept themselves.
- Students should apply decision making skills to diverse situations and problems.
- Students should understand and respect peers and adults.
- Students should understand the consequences of poor choices.
- Students should explore family roles and responsibilities.
- Students should develop safety and survival skills.

Developing Competencies in Career/Vocational Planning and Exploration

- Students should explore multiple career pathways.
- Students should develop and utilize time management skills.
- Students should understand how physical abilities, interests, and personalities affect potential jobs and careers.
- Students should have knowledge of careers and how they affect our society.

Achieving Educational Success

- Students should develop basic skills and study/learning skills.
- Students should make decisions about postsecondary training.
- Students should know which high school courses to take in order to graduate.

Guidance, Counseling, and Career Education Services

The Role of Malvern School District Counselors

The Malvern School District counselors help all students by establishing individual, group and classroom contacts with them, collaborating with teachers, and coordinating with other school or community guidance resources. The clinical skills and knowledge of the counselors are more effectively used if effort is directed in an organized way toward making Malvern School District, the teachers, and the curriculum sensitive to those aspects of personal development most associated with life success.

Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Assist students in the process of growing in personal, social, educational, and career development.

Objectives

- a. Personal Development – The counselor will assist students to:
 1. Establish and maintain a sense of personal worth and a positive self-image
 2. Develop and cultivate appropriate emotional responses to life experiences; and
 3. Understand their roles and responsibilities in school, family and community.
- b. Social Development – The counselor will assist students to:
 1. Develop and maintain effective interpersonal skills;
 2. Understand the roles and responsibilities of others in school, family and community; and
 3. Acquire knowledge of and respect for individual differences in abilities, interest, attitudes, and background.
- c. Educational Development -- The counselor will assist students to:
 1. Achieve at a level in keeping with their potential;
 2. Develop a sense of discovery about new knowledge; and
 3. Recognize their academic strengths, weaknesses, and areas of need.
- d. Career Development: -- The counselor will assist students to:
 1. Discover the meaning of work and its relationship to the individual;
 2. Develop a positive attitude and a personal identity as a worker who contributes to self and to social needs; and
 3. Understand their own aptitudes and develop their own abilities as they pertain to the world of work.

Goal #2: Assist students to appropriately cope with crisis situations through the acquisition of effective problem-solving skills.

Objectives

The counselor will assist student to:

- a. Develop strategies for exploring alternatives that allow students to successfully deal with problem situations; and
- b. Evaluate, select, and implement the appropriate solutions to problems.

Goal #3: Assist the Malvern School District staff in its efforts to promote the developmental growth of students.

Objectives

The counselor will assist staff by:

- a. Promoting a positive learning atmosphere;
- b. Promoting an understanding of the role of school personnel in the guidance program;
- c. Enhancing their counseling skills through consultation and other staff development activities; and
- d. Encouraging the recognition and use of affective skills in the teaching-learning process.

Goal #4: Assist the family in its efforts to understand the developmental growth of students.

Objectives

The counselor will assist families by:

- a. Promoting effective communication among the parents, school staff, and children; and
- b. Enhancing parenting skills that will promote the positive personal, social, educational, and career development of children.

Principles of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

ACT 908 of 1991, Section 6. states: School counselors shall spend at least seventy-five percent (75%) of work time providing direct counseling related to students, and shall devote no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of work time to administrative activities, provided that such activities relate to the provision of guidance services.

School counseling services are comprehensive in the range of activities and services provided. These include:

- Preventive classroom guidance activities;
- Individual and group counseling;
- Referrals to community agencies;
- Consultation with teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders;
- Crisis intervention; and
- Assessment, placement, and follow-up services.

A team approach is essential to comprehensive school counseling programs the team refers to teachers, parents, school counselors, administrators, and mental health professionals.

Guidance describes an instructional process or structured learning activities, which attempt to prevent problems. Such activities assist students in developing greater understanding of themselves and others and emphasize the needs of a group of students rather than those of any student.

Counseling is a process in which a trained professional forms a trusting relationship with a person who needs assistance. This relationship focuses on personal meaning of experiences, feelings, behaviors, alternatives, consequences, and goals. Counseling provides a unique opportunity for individuals to explore and express their ideas and feelings in a non-evaluative, non-threatening environment.

School Counselors Are Involved in the Following:

Classroom Guidance

A comprehensive school counseling program involves planned guidance activities for all students. These age-related exercises foster students' academic, personal, social, and career development skills. Counselors and teachers implement such activities through a collaborative effort.

The classroom guidance curriculum focuses on topics such as:

- Self-understanding
- Effective interpersonal and communication skills
- Problem-solving, decision making, and conflict resolution skills
- Effective study skills and positive attitudes toward school
- Career awareness and the world of work
- Substance abuse prevention
- Comprehension and acceptance of differences in people (i.e. racial, gender-based, cultural, religious, physical)
- Developing plans for student academic success leading to graduation
- Other topics as necessary

School counselors develop and organize guidance activities; however, this requires the support and assistance of teachers, parents, and administrators. Counselors can train teachers to conduct many activities during their classes. Other team members may deliver other guidance procedures most effectively. Regardless of who conducts the exercises, the whole team must be aware of their goals so that they can be reinforced.

Individual and Small Group Counseling

In many situations, counselors work with students when they experience problems. However, counseling must be more than the provision of remediation and crisis intervention. Developmental counseling provides students with coping strategies before a crisis occurs. This may involve seeing students individually or in small groups to help them develop and use their resources. Counseling can also be provided for parents to address specific problems that may interfere with their student's success in school.

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, making the most efficient use of the professional's time.

A group approach is not best suited for every student. For some students, the nature of the problem requires more confidentiality. Others may have extreme difficulty in relating to their peers, be overwhelmed in group situations, be personally dysfunctional, or need individual attention.

Students are referred for counseling by: teachers, parents, school administrators, and/or by themselves.

Consultation

Consultation in school counseling programs focuses on the total learning environment of the school. At Malvern School District, teachers use the counselor as a resource, seeking consultation on specific student's problems and on general issues. Many teachers can benefit from a counselor's assistance in developing new ways of responding and relating to students.

A major part of the counselor's role is to collaborate with teachers and parents, not to criticize them. In fact, school counselors can provide support and encouragement to teachers and parents who may be feeling frustrated, discouraged, overwhelmed, and unappreciated.

The counselor works with teachers, staff, and administrators at Malvern School District to help create the kind of school environments that stimulate growth and learning. The 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.

Typically, consultation involves:

- Assisting teachers with individual students or groups of students;
- Providing relevant materials and resources to teachers, especially relating to classroom guidance curriculum;
- Assisting in the identification and development of programs for students with special needs;
- Interpreting student information, such as results of standardized tests for students and team members; and
- Consulting regularly with other specialists (i.e. school-based mental health counselors and mental health paraprofessionals)

Coordination

Before guidance and counseling activities can take place, much planning, thinking, and coordinating are required. Systematic coordination of guidance programs is essential for effective delivery of services.

- Coordinate the use of school and community resources in collaboration with other team agencies;
- Assist parents in gaining access to services their children need;
- Serve as liaison between school, home, and community agencies so that efforts to help students are success and reinforced rather than duplicated;
- Plan, coordinate, and evaluate the guidance program's effectiveness; and
- Coordinate the school's test interpretation program, which usually includes interpreting test results to parents, students, and school personnel.

Education

The Malvern School District counselor may conduct workshops on specific issues for parents as requested by the parents, administrators, community, and/or students. (i.e. financial aid, career

awareness, development of study habits, etc.) The counselor may also communicate via email, social media, and the school webpage. Parents are encouraged to participate in volunteer opportunities within Malvern School District.

Making Appropriate Referrals

The school counselor establishes and maintains close working relationships with two school based mental health agencies Ouachita Behavioral Health and Wellness (OBHAW) and Therapeutic Family Services (TFS). Students may be recommended to one of these agencies by parent, student, administrator, or court request. Upon receiving a recommendation, the school counselor refers the student to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, who assigns the student to an agency. The agency coordinates with the parent and student to facilitate services. Agencies then send school counselors weekly caseload rosters.

In the event of a substantive threat assessment, the counselor and/or therapist may recommend contacting a mobile assessor from Rivendell or Pinnacle Pointe hospitals to evaluate further treatment options. Students 18 years or older may be assessed by Baptist Health-Hot Spring County psychiatric unit.

Assessment and Testing

The school counselor helps students identify their skills, abilities, achievements, and interests through counseling activities and guidance curriculum. The counselor also interprets standardized test results for parents, students, and faculty; relates the results to strengths and limitations in the Malvern School District's curriculum; and assists in planning and implementing changes in the curriculum and school's procedures.

Specific assessment instruments used by the Malvern School District include (but are not limited to):

- Accuplacer
- ACT
- ACT Aspire
- AP Exams
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
- ELPA
- NWEA
- PSAT/NMSQT

Specialized Populations and Needs

Working with students from culturally diverse populations and students with disabilities requires special attention. The school counselor's activities can promote:

- Students' and school personnel's acceptance of differences;
- Policies, procedures, and behaviors that reflect freedom from stereotypes;
- Examination of Malvern School District's testing programs to ensure that they reflect equitable standards for all students; and
- Outreach to parents and families of students from culturally diverse populations.

Orientation

At Malvern School District, orientation is a process for students, teachers and parents to learn about the guidance, counseling, and other student services offered to assist in the adjustment of new students to our school. Orientation is designed to help students make effective transition adjustments from one school setting to another. Formal programs may be used for students who advance from one campus to another. As new students enter throughout the school year, orientation is conducted by the counselor, other school personnel, and designated students.

Class Scheduling

The proper placement of students into the correct academic setting is essential. The school counselor acts in a consulting capacity at all levels in guiding students toward short and long-term educational and career objectives.

Utilization of Student Reports

The Malvern School District counselor is authorized to access any files kept by the Malvern School District. This data is utilized to professionally assist parents, faculty, students, administrators, and other counselors in helping each individual student reach their potential.

Career Awareness and Planning in School Counseling Program

Career development is a lifelong process integrating the roles, settings, and events of a person's life. The word career encompasses all the roles in which individuals are involved (i.e. student, parent, worker, family member, citizen). For this reason, Malvern School District considers career education as an integral part of students' school experiences as they grow and develop.

Malvern School District guidance curriculum focuses on facilitating interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and problem-solving skills and teamwork – all of which can increase a student’s future effectiveness in the workplace.

Guidance and general classroom activities focus on the world-of-work. Numerous opportunities exist for students to relate school subject matter to their future careers. Malvern School District teachers link all subject areas to lessons for the working world.

At Malvern School District, the school counselors, teachers, and administrators:

- Work with, advise, and make students aware of the importance of selecting the proper courses throughout school in order to meet graduation requirements, to prepare for employment, and/or to prepare for admission to post-secondary institutions.
- Provide materials on occupational and post-secondary institutions to help students understand the world of work and its expectations for employment.
- Work with individual students on post-secondary/work alternatives.
- Work with individual students experiencing difficulty with the changing roles of men and women to help understand continuous changes of male/female roles and how this relates to career choice.
- Counsel with students displaying a lack of interpersonal skills to develop the interpersonal skills necessary for harmony in the workplace.
- Make employment opportunities, college/technical school choices, and career planning materials available for students’ use to become informed about up-to-date opportunities.
- Provide current materials for career awareness and exploration to form tentative career goals and strategies to reach students and whether college or technical schools could provide those opportunities.
- Work with individual students to discuss occupational, college, and/or technical interests to understand lifestyle preferences and relate those interests to training in that area.

State Goals and Objectives for Career Education

The Arkansas Council for Career Education developed these goals and objectives:

Goal 1. Students will improve career planning and decision-making skills.

Objective: Students will be able to set goals, understand the importance of a planning process and seek assistance in decision making.

Goal 2. Students will identify information about career sources of occupational information.

Objective: Students will investigate and locate appropriate sources of career information to match their interest.

- Goal 3. Students will improve job acquisition and retention competencies.
Objective: Students will practice job interview skills and state job retention factors.
- Goal 4. Students will improve attitudes and develop an appreciation for career success.
Objective: Students will demonstrate productive, positive attitudes toward work and task accomplishment.
- Goal 5. Students will improve skills in human relationships.
Objective: Students will identify the need for good human relation skills in the world of work.
- Goal 6. Students will improve self-investigation and evaluation skills necessary for career success.
Objective: Students will be able to examine self in relation to careers, assess self-concept, and appraise own interest and capabilities.
- Goal 7. Students will understand personal, work, and societal responsibilities.
Objective: Students will demonstrate good citizenship, knowledge of relationships with, and responsibilities to peers, co-workers, supervisors and property.
- Goal 8. Students will improve understanding of economic factors influencing career opportunities.
Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of how various economic conditions (i.e. supply and demand, time, effort, specialization) affect a person and how a person interacts in the economy.
- Goal 9. Students will improve understanding of relationships of education and career choices.
Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationships of education (both formal and informal) to career opportunities.

Facilities for Guidance Program

Malvern School District meets the requirements for guidance program facilities. The guidance office includes space for displaying various materials needed by the students, a separate area for waiting, a private office for counseling, and a place for security of restricted materials. The office also has a private, dedicated telephone line.

The guidance office is located near the administrative offices and is located convenient to all students' traffic flow in all buildings. Access is given to larger room as needed for meeting space.

Student Services Needs Assessment Samples

Needs assessments questionnaires for students, parents, faculty, and referral agencies are available upon request.

School Counselor/Pupil Ratio and Other Standards for Accreditation

Six fully certified school counselors serve Malvern School District for the 2018-19 school year. The current counselor to student ratio is approximately 1 : 327.

Psychological Services

Malvern School District provides an evaluation for students with learning or adjustment problems and evaluation for students in exceptional-child education programs.

The Malvern School District provides:

- Consultation and counseling with parents, students and school personnel.
- A system for the early identification of learning potential and factors, which affect the student's educational performance.
- A system for liaison and referrals with resources available outside the school.
- The district provides written policies, which assure ethical procedures in psychological activities.

Malvern School District contracts with Ouachita Behavioral Health and Wellness (OBHAW) and Therapeutic Family Services (TFS) to provide professional counseling services on campus.

Visiting Teacher and School Social Work

Malvern School District does not currently utilize services of visiting teachers and district-employed social workers.

Occupational and Placement Services

Upon graduation, students complete surveys asking about their future plans. Counselors and/or career technical education teachers follow up with CTE completers for up to a year to determine occupational placement.

The high school counseling department offers opportunities for students to visit with local industries to secure employment after high school.

Conflict Resolution Services

These services shall include, but not be limited to the following: educational and social programs which help students develop skills enabling them to resolve differences and conflicts between groups and programs designed to promote understanding, and positive communication.

The need for programs that teach the peaceful expression and early resolution of conflict arises from many factors including overcrowded schools, tensions inherent in multicultural and multiethnic student bodies, and broad ranges of economic backgrounds. In addition there are day-to-day conflicts typical in any school setting. Furthermore, nationwide polls indicate that discipline in schools has been a prevalent issue over the last ten years and that valuable teaching is lost in maintaining order and resolving student disputes.

Truancy and dropout studies indicate a need for programs that foster self-esteem and encourage students to assume greater responsibility for improving the quality of their social and learning environments.

Conflict Resolution Training address issues assertively by enabling students to:

- Learn new skills in communication conflict resolution
- Exercise responsibility for improving their school environment
- Build a stronger sense of peer cooperation and community at school
- Peacefully express and resolve their own conflicts without adult supervision
- Feel a sense of power and accomplishment at being able to peacefully resolve their own conflicts
- Express anger in constructive ways so there is less likelihood of tension, hostility and vandalism at school
- Develop the skills necessary to behave in a more disciplined way; thereby, reducing the amount of time teachers must spend maintaining order in the classroom.

Counselors address conflict resolution training by choosing from a variety of methods and curriculum including, but not limited to, individual sessions, small group sessions, consultation, behavior management plans, and classroom visitations.

School Suicide/Crisis Plan

Malvern School District has a current crisis management plan that was updated in August 2017. The crisis response team consists of a custodian, two teachers, a school administrator, a nurse, a school counselor, a secretary, school resource officer, and an adjunct mental health professional.

An Malvern School District Crisis Plan is located in every classroom and building on campus. Each substitute teacher is given the Crisis Plan in their folders when they arrive on campus.

If a suicide threat is made on campus, a threat assessment team consisting of an administrator, counselor, mental health professional, and school resource officer will assess the student to determine the severity of the threat. Outside agencies are brought in as needed.

At-Risk Students and Dropout Prevention Program

Malvern School District defines a dropout as: Any student who leaves school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a GED program of studies, without transferring to another school.

At-risk students are those enrolled in Malvern School District, whose progress toward graduation, school achievement, preparation for employment, and a variety of health, social, educational, family and economic factors jeopardize futures as productive workers and citizens. These are students with special needs who are underserved, categorized, ignored, unchallenged, and for whom expectations are generally low.

A bold effort is made to identify these at-risk students and to work with these students and their families to ensure success at Malvern School District. Referrals are made by teachers to the counselor and/or principal as needed to get extra help and attention for these students. The counselor, administrators and/or teachers make every possible effort to work with these identified students and their parents to help identify specific problems and find resources to aid in the problem area(s).

Malvern School District has a K-12 alternative education program. Students are referred to this program for multiple reasons including, but not limited to, court involvement, lack of sufficient academic progress, behavioral and emotional needs, and family circumstances.