

Student Counselors for grades PK2-12th:

Responsibilities:

1. Facilitate the educational process of all students and integration to the educational community, particularly of those diagnosed with learning disabilities or other limitations which may cause the learning process to be more difficult.
2. Elaborate and follow up of Individual Education Programs (IEP), maintain close communication with parents and teachers.
 - a. The Individual Education Program is a guideline for accommodations made by the area student counselor, based on a previous psychological diagnosis of the student. This diagnosis should be a detailed psychological evaluation made by a mental health or learning disability professional outside the school.
 - b. The curricular accommodations contained in the IEPs are tools that provide educators with specific strategies that assist students in their learning. These accommodations need to be followed by the faculty in consultation with the student counselors and Principals. The IEP is a confidential document for educators and parents.
3. Guide, support, and supervise the faculty in the implementation of the IEPs. Observe classes and teacher-student interaction when necessary.
4. Provide professional development to the faculty and administrators regarding the latest advances in the field of psychological education.
5. Provide group orientations to the educational community (workshops, lectures, trainings, etc.). The topics and dates of these activities are scheduled together with the Principals of each area to be carried out during the course of the academic year.
6. Work in close collaboration with the school physician and Principals.

The Counseling Department performs as a referral source and therefore does not diagnose nor perform long-term therapy.

Support provided to Students:

The student counselors provide the following services to the students:

- Psycho-educational Counseling: The counselor's approach is to facilitate the learning experience for students. Time is spent in meetings with adults (teachers, parents, tutors, specialists) to address issues that may interfere with the process of student learning.
- Behavioral Support: Teachers are encouraged to first work with students in matters of discipline following the proper established procedure (e.g. having a specific set of classroom rules, calling the student's attention, assigning different seating, asking the student to stay after class to discuss the issue). Students who have behavioral difficulties beyond the norm and whose behavior has become unmanageable inside the classroom, are required to work with the counselor to develop other strategies and techniques according to more specific recommendations used to improve these types of student behaviors. Elementary, Middle, and High School Counselors participate in different committees to support the school.
- Conflict Resolution: Students who have interrelation difficulties work with their counselor in "Problem Solving Strategies". These strategies focus on the development and application of social skills (e.g. talking to students separately, gathering both parties involved to establish mutual agreements, work with anger, anxiety, and stress management, build confidence in students to better communicate with their teachers and peers, provide alternatives for teachers and peers to arrive to resolutions). Some students need more outside support to work with other areas of their emotional development affecting their social, academic, and behavioral skills. These students will work in conjunction with teachers, area counselor, parents, and in some cases, therapist.

Student Workshops: Workshops and dynamics are scheduled with the objective of meeting student needs. Workshops are given in conjunction with HR teachers to every grade once every quarter covering different topics according to student needs.

- Personal Concerns: The counselor works in the areas of personal concern of the students (e.g. divorce, substance abuse, health, death, separation, violence, etc.)

Admissions: Counselors provide support in the process of admitting new students to ensure that they are suitable to develop in the school's environment by helping in the identification of the school candidates' level of knowledge and/or learning problems.

- New & Ongoing Students: Once admitted to the school, an adjustment program is designed for students according to their academic and social needs.

- Organization and/or follow up of School Campaigns/goals: The school counselor organizes and supports other departments with prevention campaigns in different topics such as, Bullying, Theology of the Body, Alcohol, Tobacco, and other illegal drugs.
- Coordinating and supervision of the MAP TEST: The counselors aid with the coordination and supervision of administering the MAP TEST three times a year.
- Coordination and supervision of AP (Advanced Placement) exams: Counselors provide follow up for students who are taking an AP exam and who have a current IEP.

Referrals to the Counseling Department (Norms and Procedures for Teachers, 2010-2011)

Before teachers refer a student to the Counseling Department, they should keep record of observations of any academic, social, and/or psychological change in the students' behavior. Once a written running record of these changes has been made, teachers should report them to the corresponding principal.

1. Teachers must thoroughly fill out the Referral Form, being as precise as possible. Once a Referral Form is completed, Principal and Counseling Department will determine the need for school counseling involvement for future observations.
2. In case of counseling intervention: the counselor will observe the student in different settings and will have several interviews with him/her to establish a relationship as well as to obtain information first hand from the student.
3. Parents are contacted to meet with the teacher and Counseling Department in order to discuss the observations made or referrals as needed. The meeting will be documented by the Counselor in charge (using the Teacher-Parent Conference worksheet) to assure that all information given is accurate, as well as to assure responsibility of actions which will be taken by all. Parents must sign an agreement once the meeting has finalized.
4. Follow-up by the counselor will depend on the involvement of parents and outside sources. It may also involve, but will not be limited to short-term therapy or training of specific subject matter. Teachers will also receive the information about what therapy and/or training is the most beneficial to the student.
5. Any emergency cases will not follow the above procedure. These will be handled as needed at the moment.

Records and files:

The school counselor must have a file containing records of students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), or have been referred to the counseling office for any other reasons (behavioral, academics, emotional, and/or social issues). Each record must contain the following aspects:

- Updated evaluation by a specialist which demonstrates a diagnosis and recommendations specific for each case (IEP students).
- A record of meetings with parents, teachers, tutors or specialists of the student.
- Agreement of each meeting.
- Record of meetings with the students.
- Observations of the students.
- Record of students with behavioral difficulties and follow up plan between school and home.
- Record of students or group of students attending counseling regarding: psycho-educational counseling, conflict resolution, family difficulties, school adjustment, etc.
- Other relevant facts.

Note: In some cases, full IEPs are not established due to the lack of meeting criteria required for an official diagnosis. However, the therapist's recommendations will still be followed to benefit the student and optimize learning potential.

Reports

Counselors must maintain fluent verbal and written communication with the principal and the faculty and submit a monthly report communicating information of students who are experiencing difficult situations, and thus be able to work as a team to best provide much needed support.

Furthermore, each principal has access to the counseling inventory and google agenda of each counselor where they may inform themselves on daily activities relating to work duties.

The College Counselor (Grades 9th-12th)

The College Counselor provides guidance to students and their parents of the admissions and financial aid process of national and international universities and provides advice to students in choosing the right major according to his or her interests and abilities. The College Counselor meets with parents and students individually and in groups for this purpose, hosts college visits, and organizes different events like college fairs to create awareness among the school community of college options in Nicaragua and abroad.

The College Counselor is also the coordinator, supervisor, and administrator of the PSAT, SAT, and AP Exam.

Responsibilities:

1. Provide guidance to students and their parents of the admissions and financial aid process of national and international universities through ongoing individual and group meetings.
2. Provide advice to students in choosing the right major according to his or her interests and abilities.
- 3.
4. Deliver presentations to parents about the college admissions and financial aid process.
5. Host university and college visits on campus.
6. Organize different events like college fairs on school grounds to create awareness among the school community of college options in Nicaragua and abroad.
7. Coordinate, supervise and administer the PSAT, SAT, and AP Exam.
8. Prepare statistical reports of standardized test results.
9. Organize Career Week once every academic year.
10. Assist students in the application of summer programs in Nicaragua and abroad.
11. Handle filing and other general office duties.
12. Maintain updated office and computer files, including the Naviance platform.

13. Provide up-to-date information to the High School Principal and General Director about student's progress in relation to the college admissions process.
14. Work closely with the Middle and High School Student Counselor.
15. Support the administrative team.

Support provided to students:

The College Counselor provides the following services to the students:

- Individual meetings: The College Counselor schedules personalized meetings with students in grades, ninth through twelfth to discuss career selection, college options, and the admissions and financial aid process. Assistance is also provided to students in finding SAT preparation courses and summer program options in Nicaragua and abroad.
- Group presentations: These presentations are scheduled twice each year for students in ninth and tenth grade and at least three times a year for students in eleventh and twelfth grade. Topics for the presentations include: academic profile, SAT, PSAT, AP classes, letters of recommendation, community service, extracurricular activities, and college essay.
- Aptitude tests: The College Counselor coordinates aptitude tests for students, grades ninth through twelfth.
- Annual college fair: This fair is organized so that students and their parents can become familiarized with the admissions and financial aid process of colleges in Nicaragua and abroad.
- Career Week: Students acquire knowledge and understanding of different career options that are presented by school parents.
- Exam administration: College admissions and placement standardized tests like the SAT and AP Exam are administered to students each year.
- The PSAT is also administered to students in grades eighth through eleventh to prepare them for the SAT

Reports

The College Counselor sends a College Counseling Weekly Report to the High School Principal that contains the following information:

- Meetings held with students, parents and staff members.

- Student's progress in the college admissions process.
- Students that have been admitted to higher learning institutions.

- Every single event organized throughout the week.

The College Counselor also sends a semester College Acceptance and Financial Aid Report to the High School Principal, General Director and Board of Directors that contains the following information:

- Names of senior students from that particular year.
- Universities and colleges where the student has applied.
- Universities and colleges that have admitted the student.
- Scholarship and financial aid awarded.