

GUIDANCE SERVICES

Primary Goal - To provide educational, vocational and personal counseling services to the end that the student might derive maximum benefit from his or her educational experience.

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Cost Per Student</u>
15.64	5,659	\$1,837,733	\$325

ELEMENTARY COUNSELING PROGRAM

A developmental guidance curriculum is taught at each grade level from Kindergarten through grade six. In the kindergarten to grade three classrooms, counselors focus on lessons from six to twelve weeks on the topics of building social skills, increasing self-esteem, developing friendships, and making good decisions. Beginning at grade four strategies are taught about conflict resolution, improving decision making skills, and recognizing bullying and harassment. Students are taught to recognize situations that are not respectful of others and to support those students who may be harassed. These lessons are conducted from six to ten weeks. For those schools which have part-time counselors, they have been provided the smaller number of classroom lessons. For the 2006-2007 school year, each elementary school will have a full-time counselor and will have an increased number of classroom lessons on the curricula topics.

Counselors provide individual and group counseling sessions to students in all grade levels. They fully understand the impact that the stresses and crises that children may have in their lives affects their ability to manage the academics and behavior expected of them in school. Students are counseled on a wide range of issues, such as, conflict resolution, self-confidence, friendship, assertiveness, bullying/harassment, LEP, and organization/study skills. The great number of both group and individual counseling sessions demonstrates the significant impact that counselors have on the overall student population due to the many issues and challenges students face. One-third of a counselor's week is devoted to providing services specifically to students in the Learning Enrichment Program.

Elementary counselors are highly visible members of the school community and participate in many building activities, such as the Child Study Team, Pupil Services Team, Building Council, Wellness Committee, Crisis Response Team and Character Education. Counselors assist in developing intervention plans for students in crisis and oftentimes serve as a liaison with parents.

A department survey for parents (K-6) regarding their level of satisfaction concerning the elementary counseling program found that a high level of satisfaction. This survey revealed that 92% of the parents viewed the counseling services as excellent and 8%

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as good. It was also indicated on the survey that 100% believed the counseling services for their child improved his/her overall behavior and attitude. The department arranged five evening presentations for families on topics concerning parenting issues. The evenings were well attended with an average of 58 parents attending. Counselors comprehend the importance of educating parents about the current issues that may be of interest to them in learning about the concerns and issues facing their children.

Students are observed by teachers and principals as enthusiastic about participating in the classroom guidance lessons, motivated to work on issues during counseling sessions, and seeking out the counselors to share events in their daily lives. Counselors are current with the latest theories and approaches for working with students. They make strong connections with them. Based on students' responses on surveys after classroom lessons, counselors taught them some valuable lessons and ideas. Students identify that a counselor supports them, and they seek out counselors.

Teachers continue to recognize the school guidance counselor as a resource. Teachers noted that they were provided with important strategies, interventions and ideas regarding at-risk and gifted students in their classrooms. Through the classroom instruction and consultation, teachers are able to learn strategies to provide for students who are in need of an intervention. They appreciate the information that is supplied to them by the elementary counselor. In the past, some teachers noted that due to the part time role of some counselors in their elementary school building, they were not able to always access the elementary counselor in a timely manner. For the 2006-2007 school year, each building will have a counselor who will be available to support the staff and students on a full-time basis. Parent meetings facilitated by elementary counselors continues to be another area of support noted by teachers

Principals recognize that the services of counselors provide to the students, teachers and parents are very valuable. Principals observe the positive relationships that are developed between counselors and teachers. The strategies and plans offered by the counselors to teachers are helpful in addressing social and behavioral issues displayed by some students. The principals observe that during the classroom presentations counselors are able to positively interact with a large number of students. Principals appreciate the positive relationships counselors developed with parents, and the efforts made to assist parents with issues regarding their children.

Counselors continue to review the developmental curricula for each of the grade levels to ensure it is current and pertinent to the issues facing the students daily. They recognize a need to review the grade three curriculum, *Pumsy in Search of Excellence*, which was last reviewed six years ago. Counselors will be completing this review during the upcoming year. They recognize that they serve as a resource to the teachers who will sometimes need assistance with interventions in the classroom and to the parents who may be bewildered with the challenges of parenting.

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Level 7 - 12

Parent Conferences

One hundred percent (100%) of the parents of eighth graders (456) participated in at least one conference with their guidance counselor during this past school year. This percent is identical to the percent in the 2004-05 evaluation. One hundred percent (100%) of the parents completing the survey found the conference to be either very helpful or helpful. The percentage of parents rating the conference at least helpful was equivalent to responses reported in the 2004-05 evaluations.

Two halls, Norris (107) and Houston (100), participated in the seventh grade annual review, which is the first step in student's high school programming process. One hundred eighty-seven (187) parents responded to the department survey, such that 99% of the respondents believed the conference was very helpful or helpful.

After much discussion over the past couple of years about the need to revise the way in which the 7th grade annual review meeting is conducted, two halls Calhoun (107) and Clay (106) piloted a new format for the seventh grade annual review meeting. The revised format included an invitation for 7th grade parents to participate in a small group activity, which focused on organizational skills and the transition to the junior high. This meeting took place during a student's normal advisory time and shared beneficial information regarding classroom routines, use of locker, planner use, and other academic related concerns. At the end of the first semester, these parents were invited to a second meeting with their child for a career exploration activity. Out of the 67 meetings conducted with Clay students and their parents and 26 meetings with Calhoun parents, the parent survey (100%) responded that the conference was either very helpful or helpful and that these conferences should be continued.

Two hundred and twenty-seven (227) seventh graders and 185 eighth graders self-referred to the Guidance Department at Shaker Junior High School. One hundred and seventy-three (173) ninth graders, 205 tenth graders, 223 eleventh graders and 496 twelfth graders self-referred to the Guidance Department at Shaker High School numbered. These totals represent duplicate numbers of students who have self-referred at various times during the school year.

At Shaker Junior High School there were 150 external suspensions, compared to 274 and 302 during the two previous years. Junior high school counselors reported that they or the student assistance counselor meet with each student afterward. For those students who are at-risk for failure, counselors are aware of the many services available within the school to help them. They arranged for students to have the support in the intervention programs: the block support aide, FOCUS program, reading and writing program, tutors, ELA support, and Fundamental Math 8.

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At Shaker High School, meetings occur with parents at the annual reviews and the case conferences held throughout the year. In addition, counselors participate in those conferences between the hall offices and parents regarding students who had difficulties in the area of academics and behavior. The counselor presents students at-risk of academic failure and behavioral concerns to the Pre-referral Team. A plan is developed by the members of the team to assist these students with interventions, and counselors monitor students progress to ensure the plan is successful. These interventions and follow-up are shared with parents. Guidance counselors continue to make an extra effort to stay in close contact with principals concerning students who had particular issues that negatively impacted on their time at Shaker High School. Counselors also attend re-entry meetings for Board of Education placed students returning to Shaker High School.

Counselor role in teacher-initiated consultations

The daily block meetings, which the guidance counselors attend, serve as a means to keep the counselor and teachers up-to-date about students' academic, social and emotional progress. The counselors facilitate the block meetings with parents invited to discuss their children's academic performance. When special area teachers are unable to attend parent conferences held during block meetings, the counselors arrange for their input through a form, which allows for the non-block teachers to provide input to the parents. Parents continue to contact the guidance counselors directly to request coordination of academic services and follow up.

At Shaker High School, teachers continue to depend on counselors to facilitate meetings with parents and students regarding academic and behavioral classroom issues. Teachers also contact counselors both formally and informally in order to confer regarding student concerns and all updates.

Follow-up studies of graduates

The high school counselors make telephone calls to students who have graduated the previous year. This activity provides data that indicates the effectiveness of counseling, the success of students, and a positive public relations "follow-up" for our most recent graduates and their families.

Counselors were able to contact 338 of the 2005 graduates. Of this number,
-Eighty-eight (88)% (N=298) of those beginning college completed two semesters in the college of their choice (88% class of 2004).
-Eighty-nine (89)% (N=297) of those completing two semesters planned to go to a third semester (89% in 2004)

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Post-high school plans

Class	4 Year College	2 Year College	Other Education	Employment	Military	Other
Class of 2006	62%	33%	1%	3%	1%	0%
Class of 2005	61%	33%	2%	4%	0%	0%
Class of 2004	57%	35%	2%	4%	1%	0%
Class of 2003	61%	32%	2%	5%	2%	0%

The Guidance Department continues to have an ongoing commitment to building relationships with a variety of colleges which include two and four year, private and public institutions. Several years ago, the department began a multi-year process of visiting colleges and universities.

District dropout rate

Year	Shaker High School
2005-06	1.9%
2004-05	1.1%
2003-04	1.0%

Note: Sometimes Shaker students withdraw and become part of the statistics, but later re-register during the next year. They become "short-term drop outs."

The counselors monitor student academic progress at each five-week and quarterly report, so that intervention services could be arranged or parent conferences could be scheduled in order to review the child's educational plan and identify areas of need. At the Junior High School a system to monitor student quality points is used to identify those students who may not attain sufficient quality points to be promoted. The quality points are reviewed quarterly through the block meetings to determine if additional services are needed. Students are provided comprehensive remedial and special education support through the Pupil Services Department. Students that were at risk to earn either a 1 or 2 on the grade 7 or grade 8 ELA assessments received additional AIS services beginning in November. They received this support during the silent reading period every other day, which continued until the end of the school year. A model for the seventh grade annual reviews was piloted this year in two halls. The career lesson was now presented during the advisory group with a follow-up parent meeting. This provided a more effective method of setting career goals and long-term plans for high school programming. This model will be expanded to all students next year. The Focus Program, block aides and student assistance counselor played a large role in providing support to students without disabilities who are at risk for academic failure.

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The Natural Helper Program is now in its eighth year at Shaker High School. In all, five (5) students participated in the program. The following services are provided by the Natural Helpers: tutoring, orientation to high school for new students, peer counseling, support for students with various disabilities, and tutoring for elementary-age students in each of our elementary schools. The Personal Improvement Intervention Program (PIIP) was implemented for the tenth year. High school counselors, in conjunction with high school administrators, identified approximately 21 students who were suitable for this program, which focused on providing students at risk for academic failure with academic support and counseling. Additionally, there was a great deal of contact between the program, the family, counselors and teachers at Shaker High School. The Best Buddies program has 40 students in total, which includes disabled and non-disabled students. Social activities include dances, holiday celebrations, and parties. The program will be expanded to the junior high school where a grant to support the program has been available through the state.

This is the second year of Instant Admissions Day at Shaker High School by Hudson Valley Community College. Eighty-two (82) students met with the admissions counselors and were accepted into the college that day. Students and their parents feel this day enabled them to have a supportive environment when working with the college admissions process.

Twenty-one (21) students completed PIIP during the past school year. Individual personal improvement plans were developed for each student, which addressed academic and behavioral goals. Over the course of the 2005-2006 school year, 9 out of a possible 21 students passed all of their subjects for the year (43%). This percentage is down from a year ago (62%). For core subjects, 10 out of 21 students passed their entire core subjects for the year. This demonstrates that out of a possible 21 students, 10 of them were promoted to the next grade level without being required to attend summer school (48%). As for the other students, 6 students failed one core subject and attended summer school, and 5 students failed 2 or more core subjects and attended summer school. At the end of the summer school session, 19 out of 21 students are on target to graduate with their class. The overall grade point average was 74%. This is slightly less than a year ago (77%). A high priority is assisting students in meeting their graduation requirements. Seventeen (17) out of 21 students were involved in taking at least one Regents examination for an 80% passing rate. Each of the students met with the school counselor and teacher assistant assigned to the program approximately five to ten periods per week. During this time, there was a heavy emphasis on organizational skills, study skills, completion of assignments and preparation for quizzes.

The Guidance Department continues to develop relationships with colleges throughout the region and beyond, which included two-year, four-year, and private and public

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schools. The College Visitor program, coordinated by the Guidance Departments from our District, Bethlehem, Guilderland, South Colonie and Shenendehowa, has also provided the counselors with an opportunity to communicate with the admissions counselors from colleges outside of this region. This has afforded our students the opportunity to meet with college admissions counselors that they may not have been able to visit on campus. The department currently uses the *My Road College and Career Program* to access college and career information.

Our rate of acceptance at several highly competitive schools for the class of 2006 was consistent with the class of 2005. The plan to maintain a high acceptance rate to competitive colleges includes a general increase in personal contact with admissions officers, increase contact with admissions officers regarding specific students, increase in students selecting early action and early decision, and provision of strategies to students entertaining applying to competitive colleges. The five-year acceptance rate for the majority of these schools continues to be above the national average. More information on this subject can be found in the Competitive College Study.

EVALUATIONS

During the 2005-06 school year parent training programs provided by the Guidance Department at Shaker Junior High School were study skills and Internet Safety. At Shaker High School the following programs were provided: Financial Aid, Eighth Grade Parent Night, College Admissions Testing and Junior Parent Night.

Students at both schools tend to be very satisfied with the guidance counseling provided to them. An indication of their satisfaction continues to be the large number of self-referrals to both Junior and High School counselors. Counselors continue to meet individually with students on a variety of different topics.

The visibility of the counselors at both schools enhance the contact time with teachers. Teachers would often seek out particular student information from the guidance counselor because counselors are available in teacher offices during the school day. Counselors provide valuable information about student concerns to teachers. The primary focus of communication with the guidance counselors by teachers is typically to address issues concerning academics and challenging behaviors. Teachers continue to be pleased that guidance counselors facilitate parent meetings that address the aforementioned issues. These meetings were scheduled weekly both before and after school.

Principals at Shaker High School and Shaker Junior High School continue to rely on guidance counselors for information regarding families and students, especially those with academic and behavioral issues. Principals depend on counselors to facilitate

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parent meetings to address difficult situations regarding students and families. The principals, overall, were extremely pleased with the counselors work with students and families that had various issues and concerns.

The principals at Shaker High School and Shaker Junior High School indicate that they are pleased that the counselors have added additional counseling sessions for students who appear not to be engaged in the every day events of the schools. At the High School the counselors, student assistance counselor and school psychologist provided AIS counseling services for those students who were at risk of not passing Regents examinations. Students met biweekly with the AIS counselor to discuss progress on goals to help them remain on track for passing their courses. The Junior High School principal is pleased with the Block Aide Program at the Junior High and would like to see this program expanded to provide service to more students. The High School principals continue to be pleased with the support provided by PIIP. The Goodrich School has also been cited as a powerful resource for a small number of students, which has significantly modified the behaviors of students who are at risk for academic failure. Over the past years elementary principals had expressed a concern about the split of guidance counselors at certain buildings. With the full-time elementary counselors in each school next year, there will be increased guidance and counseling services for those schools.

Ninety-five percent (95%) of the class of 2006 went on to college, which is an indication of overall guidance effectiveness. Another indicator of the effectiveness of the guidance program is the success rate of Shaker High School students accepted at competitive colleges. Of the ten most difficult colleges in the greater northeast, Shaker High School's five-year average acceptance rate was again higher than the national average in 9 out of 9 schools. One school did not report their rate. Shaker High School graduates also had an excellent rate of acceptance at the 41 schools ranked as very difficult in the greater northeast. The *Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges* was used to determine the "most difficult" and "very difficult" schools.

Family Court Referrals - 3

Attendance Data

SHS Letters written by principals to parents about attendance:

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Letters written at 20 absences for second warning	491	549	294
Principal's letter for final notice (25 absences)	355	230	478
Number of students who lost course credit	94	90	156

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Student Assistance Counselors

At Shaker High School, One hundred eighty-two (182) students were seen individual counseling. The student assistance counselor presents information in Health classes on the topics: decision-making, tobacco use, substance abuse education, DWI and Prom Promise, team building, wellness and harassment. In addition the counselor is a guest speaker in Economic classes to discuss investing and credit history.

At Shaker Junior High School the student assistance counselor met with two hundred thirteen (213) students either individually or in groups. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of these students, seen individually for counseling, passed all of their courses, 9% passed at least 75% of their courses, and 2% passed at least 50% or less of their courses. As a result of the intervention provided by the student assistance counselor, guidance counselor and the students' teachers, they performed well academically and socially.

The principals, guidance counselors, teachers, and parents at Shaker Junior High School and Shaker High School continue to refer students to the student assistance counselor on a regular basis for a variety of social and adolescent concerns. Both student assistance counselors provided an excellent level of support to the schools, such that they worked closely with students, faculty, parents, psychologists and administrators. The student assistance counselor at Shaker High School was the SADD, Natural Helper, GLASS (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Students) and Best Buddies advisor and performed each of these duties in an effective manner. The student assistance counselor at Shaker Junior High School was a member of the At-Risk Committee, Crisis Response Team, and adult mediator for peer mediation. The principals noted the difference the student assistance counselor made in the lives of students.

The relationship between the student assistance counselor and the teachers and administrators is extremely positive. They attributed the counselors being successful due to their visibility and approachable nature.

Overall, the Student Assistance Program was effective in that it provided support for students with academic, behavioral and social difficulties. The number of referrals in each school was, once again, an indicator of the students' level of comfort with the program. Both programs have developed a positive image and students often seek them out for support. The counselors have skillfully collaborated with the high school and junior high school counselors. The counselors continue to be at the forefront of supporting students with acute emotional issues.

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Additional Information

The elementary guidance program continues to be an effective developmental program. Last year, elementary counselors presented over 1,190 classroom guidance lessons. Students are able to develop conflict resolution skills, improve their self-esteem, recognize and counteract bullying and harassment, and utilize good decision making strategies. All through the instruction and support of the elementary counselors. The junior high and senior high counselors provide programming and career planning for students at key developmental points during their secondary education. All students are fully included in both the junior high and senior high guidance programs. Students and parents are able to make well-informed decisions regarding programming, curricula and post-graduate plans. Counselors serve as critical liaisons for students as they move through their secondary education.

For the coming year, the High School counselors will investigate the use of Infinite Campus software program for programming in coordination with the scheduling completed by the hall principals. The goal will be to reduce paperwork when revising schedules and planning programs. In addition, the high school transcript and four-year programming sheets will be revised using Infinite Campus. The Character Education program will be revised and classroom lessons be delivered by role model students and teachers in ninth and tenth grade classrooms. The Best Buddies program will be expanded to the Junior High School with the student assistance counselor as the advisor. The Junior High counselors will expand the seventh grade annual review meeting piloted last year into all four halls. The elementary counselors will review the third grade developmental curriculum, *Pumsy, In Search of Excellence*.