

Addressing the Needs of All Students

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Introduction

Any course taken in education will make it clear that every child is unique, every child has their own way of learning, and every child should receive the chance to excel and be engaged in school. The importance of this is also seen within the school counseling department, where counselors need to be aware of their students needs and backgrounds. Not only do learning styles impact every child, but also physical, cultural, and cognitive differences. Counselors need to welcome each student they work with without bias.

Issues and trends

As America continues to become more diverse, the counselor's role continues to become more and more important. It is often the counselors that "will play a pivotal role in helping teachers become aware of cultural differences and enabling schools to celebrate cultural diversity" (Schmidt, 2014, p. 331). While it is not expected that counselors become experts on every student's background, culture, religion, and worldview, it is important for counselors to be engaged in multicultural awareness and to create activities that accept and welcome all individuals.

The need for school counselors needing to work directly with students and to clearly define the school counselor role has been a current trend that we will continue to see (Zagelbaum et. al., 2014). Recent trends also show an increase with remote learning and the idea of counselor roles becoming more virtual (Hodges, 2013). Counselors need to be ready to stay up to date with technology and current trends (Schmidt, 2014, p. 335) and ways to stay in touch with students.

Management of a school counseling program

While multicultural awareness was mentioned early, it is important to bring up again: much of a school counselor's program includes managing openness and acceptance of different cultures. It is also important for counselors to be aware of how multiculturalism impacts education and different student's educational views and needs (Schmidt, 2014, p. 332). Being

aware that a cookie cutter, one size fits all, approach will no longer work in today's world. School counselors need to be aware of this and work to assess their program formally and informally, being ready to adapt and change as needed.

Balancing duties

Even with the importance of school counselor roles needing to be reformed and clearly defined (Zagelbaum et. al., 2014), there are still logistics that often require school counselors to take on additional duties. School counselors need to be ready to stand up and advocate for their jobs and the needs of their students. Actively engaging in conversations with school administrators and even presenting to stakeholders such as superintendents and school boards can help ensure that school counselors can best accomplish their jobs and help support their students.

Meanwhile, counselors in the school setting need to be ready to think outside the box, just like educators. There may be duties that can actually be used to help support students and informally give counselors feedback. Covering lunch duty can allow school counselors to casually speak with students and check in. Helping with bus duty can perhaps show which students have stressed parents or families that may be struggling financially. Even when specific counseling duties are not taking place, counselors can still take advantage of different duties that can help them reach out to students that they may not otherwise realize are struggling.

Conclusion

It is by having respect for every child that counselors are able to meet the needs of all of their students. Embracing differences and celebrating them allow students to feel accepted and welcomed, allowing them to succeed within the school setting.

References

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