**Mariner High School**

**School Counseling Program Implementation Survey**

Please rate each statement below in terms of the degree to which it is currently implemented in your School’s School Counseling program. Circle your response using the following Rating Scale:

***1 = Not Present; 2 = Development in Progress; 3 = Partly Implemented; 4= Fully Implemented***

1. A written mission statement exists and is used as a foundation by all counselors. 1 2  **3** 4

2. Services are organized so that all students are well served and have access to them. 1 2 3 **4**

3. The program operates from a plan for closing the achievement gap for minority 1 2 3  **4**

and lower income students.

4. The program has a set of clear measurable student learning objectives and 1 **2** 3 4

 goals are established for academics, social/personal skills, and career development.

5. Needs Assessment’s are completed regularly and guide program planning. 1  **2** 3 4

6. All students receive classroom guidance lessons designed to promote academic, 1 2 3  **4**

social/personal, and career development.

7. The program ensures that all students have academic plans that include testing, 1 2 3 **4**

individual advisement, long-term planning, and placement.

8. The program has an effective referral and follow-up system for handling student crises. 1 2 3 **4**

9. School counselors use student performance data to decide how to meet student needs. 1 2 3 **4**

10. School counselors analyze student data by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic level to 1 **2** 3 4

identify interventions to close achievement gaps.

11. School counselor job descriptions match actual duties. 1 2  **3** 4

12. School counselors spend at least 80% of their time in activities that directly benefit 1 2 3  **4**

students.

13. The school counseling program includes interventions designed to improve the school’s 1 2 3  **4**

ability to educate all students to high standards.

14. An annual review is conducted to get information for improving next year’s programs. 1 2 3 **4**

* School counselors use computer software to:

 access student data 1 2 3  **4**

analyze student data 1 2 3  **4**

use data for school improvement 1 2 3  **4**

16. The school counseling program has the resources to allow counselors to complete 1 2 3  **4**

appropriate professional development activities.

17. School counseling priorities are represented on curriculum and education committees. 1 2 3  **4**

18. School counselors communicate with parents to coordinate student achievement and 1 2 **3** 4

gain feedback for program improvement.

**School Counseling Program**

**Gaps**

The results from the survey show that the program does not have a set of clear and measurable student learning objectives in the areas of academics, personal/social issues, and career development. Three out of the five counselors agreed that this year, one of the goals was to increase the number of students taking the PSAT and SAT. Fortunately, this was accomplished. In September this year only 22 students from Mariner took the SATs, whereas in October the number increased to 52. For the PSAT, last year 107 students from Mariner took it, and 200 students took it this year. This is definitely a great goal that was accomplished by the counseling team. However, they agree that more clear objectives and goals need to be established for the future.

Regarding the question about needs assessments being completed regularly, the counselors say that it is a development in progress. They mentioned they are not as consistent with needs assessments as much as they should. They have created needs assessments that are answered by the teachers in order to create a guidance curriculum, but admit that they need to focus on this aspect more, especially creating needs assessments that the kids can answer to.

When it comes to analyzing student data by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic level to identify interventions to close achievement gaps, they responded that it too is a development in progress. They mentioned that the Leadership Team is looking into it since Latino boys are doing so poorly in their classes. The counselors do look at data in the form of progress reports to identify students that are getting Fs and Ds and create an intervention with those that are failing.

**Strengths**

A very important strength from the program is that it operates from a plan for closing the achievement gap for minority and lower income students. Mariner High School as a whole mainly serves these two populations, therefore, both the school and the school counseling program’s main focus is on helping these kids be successful, not only in school, but in life. The school counseling program is very involved in making decisions as to who enters the LAP programs, which helps giving learning assistance to students that have not scored high on the state exams. A couple of the counselors run programs where clothing and food are given to kids and families that need it. By doing this, kids are able to better concentrate on their classes and ultimately, graduate. Lastly, the school counseling program always reaches out to minority students to be part of clubs or organizations that will help them find a path in their high school journey. One of the counselors helps run the MAP program which stands for Minority Achieving Program. During this time, students are able to talk and ask questions about anything regarding college or high school life. More about this program will be discussed in the Community Mapping section of this paper.

Another very strong asset of this program involves delivering classroom guidance to all students designed to promote academics, social/personal issues, and career development. Last year, the counselor program visited the Social Studies and English Classes, including ELL and IEP classes. The visits from September to April totaled 438 classes, reaching each student 4-6 times. They documented these visits on the Mariner’s database system named Aspen in order to let staff and parents know what was talked about during these visits. The counseling team used and still uses Prezi to do their presentations and rehearse them several times so that the message is the same for every student. Lastly, they surveyed teachers in June for feedback regarding the material covered. So far this year, all counselors have visited the classrooms every month for all grades regarding topics such as graduation requirements, transcripts, college information for juniors and seniors, and diversity for sophomores and freshmen. From this point on, the counselors will continue to visit the classrooms every month until the end of the year.

**Recommendations**

Based on the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey results, it is extremely important that efforts to create more needs assessments increase in the school counseling program. By doing this, the counselors are truly providing what students express they need, instead of what counselors think students need. It seems that students would benefit from group counseling in various topics, but in order to find out what topics to cover in a group, a needs assessment should take place. When I asked the counselors about running groups, none of them mentioned they wanted to run one at the moment.

It is also important that the program comes up with measurable objectives and goals that can be accomplished throughout the school year. All counselors should meet with an administrator to come up with valid and important goals that will help and benefit not only the counseling program but also the schools’ improvement plan. The school’s improvement plan is to increase graduation rates among all students. Therefore, it makes sense that collaboration takes place to monitor if the established goals have been met.

Another recommendation I would make to the counseling program is to be more involved with the Spanish speaking Parents at the school. Every month there are meetings that I am co-facilitating where Latino parents receive information about how to help their children succeed, as well as for them to ask questions or concerns about their children’s education. If the school wants to reach every minority in the school, it is important that counselors are involved in getting to know these parents and show them that they want to work with them in helping their children succeed.

**Discussion of the Results**

When I discussed the survey results with the counselors, I was impressed of how they responded to the recommendations I made to improve the program. They were really receptive to the feedback and admitted that they needed to improve some parts of the program to make it a stronger one. For the Spanish speaking parent meetings, they agreed that at least one counselor will be present every month to make themselves more visible to this community. Even though they were very receptive of the feedback, they also mentioned that the amount of work they have does not always allow them to improve the program the way they would want to but that they certainly try their best to do it. For them classroom presentations are a big focus because it allows all students, without exception, to be reached regarding topics that are fundamental for their academic, career and personal/social success.