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June 21, 2016

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Approval of Revisions to Guidance Program Policy

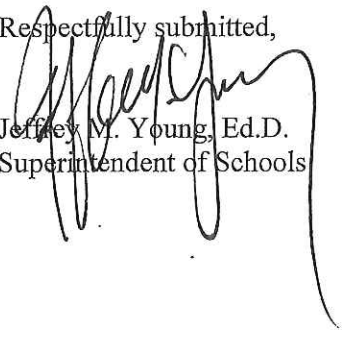
Recommendation: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the guidance program policy as detailed in the attached document.

This is a second reading of the revisions to this policy.

Description: These revisions to the guidance program policy are being presented to align the policy to the current practices with respect to counseling and counseling materials being free from bias and stereotypes and to align the language of the policy with recommendations from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Civil Rights Audit regarding ensuring all counseling and counseling materials being free from bias and stereotypes.

Supporting Data: Redline of Guidance Program Policy

Respectfully submitted,


Jeffrey M. Young, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Guidance is defined as helping individuals understand themselves in the light of their abilities, aptitudes, interests, attitudes, strengths and limitations. This process should assist students in the development of their potential; their decisions relating to personal, educational, and vocational matters, and also in becoming capable of mature self-guidance.

The school district's guidance program will be based on this definition and developed from these broad fundamental principles:

1. Individuals are different from one another in their capabilities, aptitudes, interests, needs, goals, desires and values.
2. Conditions may be improved. Equality of educational opportunity will benefit the individual and society.
3. Guidance is a continuous and developmental process. Every experience of the individual influences his/her performance in some way.
4. Guidance does not propose to program an individual's course of action but rather tries to assist him/her in arriving at his own satisfactory solutions.

Guidance services will include: educational guidance; testing programs; occupational, career, and higher education assistance and information; study aids; consultation services; and personal developmental guidance as needed. These services will be available to all students.

While some of the problems of the individual may relate to behavior and consequently entail guidance on behavior, student discipline will not be a regular function of guidance personnel.

Guidance Counselors and other personnel shall represent to the students a broad spectrum of education and career opportunities. Race, color, sex, gender, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, disability, and sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and religion, pregnant or parenting status, genetic information, socioeconomic status and/or homelessness or association with a person who has or is perceived to have one (1) or more of these characteristics shall not be considered as limiting factors in career determination.

"Career Day" programs and other occupational information shall include representatives of both sexes and of minority group members in a broad variety of occupational roles. Schools shall not permit materials including pictorial representations to be used to recruit students for employment, including training, that contain a preference of individuals of particular race, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, religion, or national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, age, genetic information, pregnant or parenting status, marital status, socioeconomic status or homelessness. Any pictorial representation in such materials, in the aggregate, shall depict members of both sexes and of minority groups.

Counseling and counseling materials shall be free from bias and stereotypes on the basis of ~~material or tests shall be employed for guidance purposes which discriminate and/or limit choices on the bases of~~ race, color, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, genetic information, socioeconomic

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status or homelessness. To ensure that this occurs, all counselors are expected to encourage students to consider programs of student, courses, extracurricular activities and occupational opportunities on the basis of individual interests, abilities and skills; examine testing materials for bias and counteract any found bias when administering tests and interpreting test results, communicate effectively with limited English proficient and disabled students and facilitate their access to all programs and services offered by the district; provide limited English proficient students with the opportunity to receive guidance and counseling in a language they understand; and support students in educational and occupational pursuits that are nontraditional for their gender. Additionally, all counselors are expected to review and evaluate counseling materials, consistent with the recommendations of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to ensure that these materials are assessed concerning the ability to achieve fairness and sensitivity in content and language by excluding language or content that might disadvantage or offend a student because of sex, gender, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, genetic information, socioeconomic status, homelessness or cultural, economic or geographical background and to include content and language that reflects the diversity of the student population.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L.c. 71, §§38A - 38F & 46G
603 C.M.R. 26.04

Adopted: June 16, 2009