

The primary responsibility of the District is to provide for the highest quality in education, as well as an environment that is conducive to learning.

Interfering with the District's ability to offer the highest quality in education are many prevalent problems. Some of these include low self-esteem, family dysfunction, stress, teenage pregnancy, suicide, eating disorders, tobacco use, chemical dependency, and other health issues affecting our students, their families, and those around them. Students confronted by these concerns cannot make full use of the educational process.

It is the expectation of the District that students not use alcohol and other drugs. Chemical use has long been demonstrated to be a cause or a contributing factor in absenteeism, classroom disruptions, declining grades, discipline referrals, tardiness, vandalism, and drop-out rates. The District is committed to educating students, parents, employees, and the entire school community about the reality of those health problems, the causes, effects, dynamics of progression, and available sources of assistance.

It is the commitment of the District to develop a student assistance program to aid in the early identification and intervention with students who may be affected by problems that interfere with their ability to make informed life decisions.

Many students are troubled by problems that interfere not only with their academic and cocurricular performance, but with their emotional, physical, mental, and social development as well. The main goal of the student assistance program shall be to systematically and professionally respond to students' problems as they are manifested in school. The student assistance program shall provide a structured, organized approach to offer assistance to students troubled by physical, emotional, social, legal, sexual, medical, familial, or chemical use problems.

Guidelines

The student assistance program shall be implemented based on the following principles:

1. The policy shall apply to all students.
2. Students shall be encouraged to seek assistance to determine if personal problems are causing unsatisfactory academic or cocurricular performance. The program desires to create a climate that eliminates the social stigma associated with getting help. If performance problems are corrected, no further action shall be taken.
3. Referral to the student assistance program shall be voluntary.

4. The program shall provide for preliminary assessment of student problems through a team effort of trained personnel who review the behavior(s) of concern and make appropriate recommendations to involve the students in a campus-based educational support group, other school-support services, or outside community resources. Costs for diagnostic and treatment services outside the school shall be the responsibility of the parents or guardians.
5. Any District employee is required to obtain written consent with a child's parent before the employee may conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment unless the examination, test, or treatment is required by TEA's policy concerning abuse investigations and reports.
6. It is the intent of the student assistance program to work cooperatively with parents and guardians to resolve student problems. Parents and guardians shall be contacted and encouraged to become involved as soon as possible when appropriate.
7. All records and discussions of personal problems shall be handled in a confidential manner. These records shall be kept at the designated counseling resource, and shall not become a part of the student's cumulative folder.
8. The program shall also provide a structured, organized liaison between the existing school services and outside agencies. This shall include assisting and cooperating with the educational program of students and in the adjustment of the student returning from an outside placement.
9. This policy shall not alter or replace existing administrative policy, disciplinary procedures, contractual agreements, or state law, but serves to assist in their utilization.

The District recognizes the responsibility of the school in responding to student problems and the role and responsibility in preventing problems and promoting health as part of a comprehensive plan.

**Confidentiality
Statement**

The District student assistance program is a cooperative effort on the part of the entire faculty, student body, and community. A great deal of cooperation and trust is needed for the success of the program. The student assistance program is a voluntary support system with a philosophy built around "care and concern" for students whose behavior is interfering with their ability to learn. Referral to the program shall always be based on observable behaviors of

concern. It is the intent of the program to offer support toward behavioral change and not to diagnose or provide treatment.

To preserve the student's privacy, strict adherence to confidentiality shall be maintained in all aspects of the program. Only those school staff members who need to know about the student's personal problems shall have access to such information.

The student assistance program referral records shall not be a part of the student's permanent record. Information shared by students in conversations with program staff or in support groups shall remain confidential, except in the case of threat of harm to self or others or suspected child abuse, as required by law. Information shared with parents about their child shall be limited to observable behaviors.