

Advisement Programs: A Part of the Educator's Future

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In the state of Florida, a recent program called "Teachers as Advisors" has been implemented in selected high schools.¹ The program is the result of the Omnibus Education Bill created in the 1984 Florida legislature which, in part, appropriated two million dollars to implement the program.² The intent was to create advisement programs in all high schools by January 1986; although the mandatory implementa-

tion date has been retargeted, advisement programs are still very much in Florida's future. Pilot programs in thirty-nine high schools currently are in operation within the state.³

Advisement, in the context of the program, is a system of providing assistance to high school students, primarily in the areas of academic and career guidance. It is a component of the guidance function but is delivered by classroom teachers. Advisement focuses on the instructional end of the guidance continuum of services. It cuts across several of the guidance functions that do not require specialized preparation. Guidance functions normally would include all of the following: dissemination of career information; guidance growth instructional units; registration and placement; records maintenance; testing; counseling; and referral. Advisement relates to the teaching or instructional components of the guidance services.

Successful advisement programs

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from throughout the United States were used as models for Florida pilot programs. Some noteworthy advisement programs can be found in places such as Wilde Lake High School in Columbia, Maryland; Ferguson-Florissant Schools in St. Louis, Missouri; Cobb County Schools in Cobb County, Georgia; and Gunderson High School in San Jose, California.⁴ The overall intent of providing advisement programs is not only to increase the amount of academic and career advisement available to students but to provide an adult for every student — an adult who is accessible to the student and can be there as a listener and a student advocate if a need arises.

Advisement programs have been growing in the past twenty years throughout the United States. They are known by a variety of titles: expanded homeroom, advisory period, homebase, advisory base, student assistance, and adviser—advisee time.⁵ The implementation and emphases are quite different from place to place although several universal components exist.

Advisement programs originated in part from the Model Schools Project conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) who did research and made recommendations for the establishment of advisement programs in their work from 1969–1974.⁶ They cited that it appeared to be impossible for counselors, administrators, and deans to handle all of the guidance-related functions in a typical high school due to the high ratio of students to each professional. They felt there was a real need for

students to have adults to whom they could relate.

The advisement movement is a natural process in response to the serious social problems confronting many youth. The alarming information on teenage runaways, teenage suicide, and drug usage to name a few concerns have led many educators as well as concerned adults to feel that additional guidance and advisement services are needed in the schools. University of Minnesota Search Institute statistics state that currently there are over one million runaways in the United States. Alarming reports indicate that the average age of initial experimentation with drugs is twelve and one-half, while one out of every three children between the ages of thirteen and fifteen has had sexual intercourse. Further, sixty-two percent of all children in the United States do not live with both of their biological parents.⁷

The list continues, and the rationale for adult guidance clearly is substantiated. When one examines the need for educational and career planning for young people, educators find further need for expanded helping services.

Advisement Programs

Most advisement programs incorporate three components: individual advisement, group advisement and parent contact. Of these, the most innovative is group advisement.

Group advisement usually is scheduled one time during the school week. Advisement is administered through a traditional activity bell schedule which incorporates the group time into the daily schedule.

advisement. He saw advisement as a return to teaching approaches utilized some thirty years ago. Although it was not called advisement or organized as such, teachers of earlier eras were involved with academic and career planning, and they often took part in their students' decision making. Other research and exploration shows this to be the case. Advisement represents in a paradoxical fashion both a new program and an opportunity which calls upon some of the proven approaches used by educators in the past.

Advisement programs are in the educator's future. Advisement is a needed response to the changing nature of education. It offers a more wholistic approach for the teacher in working with his or her students. With the well-established knowledge explosion influencing and rendering somewhat obsolete the traditional fact-giving teaching styles, the role of teacher must be redefined. A more wholistic and growth-oriented form of education must be served. The new style must encompass the emotional, physical, and social aspects of the child as well as the intellectual aspect.

With the current crop of young people who seem to display an array of concerns in response to societal changes, the challenge is apparent. Educators can no longer stay in the classroom to disseminate facts and information; they must get involved in preparing students for the world and equipping them with resources to meet the future. Advisement is one of the exciting new programs which offers educators an innovative and challenging approach to meeting the

needs of students as they always have attempted to do.

References

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