Indiana Gold Star Counseling Award: Redesigning School Counseling
Bloomington H. S. North & Bloomington H. S. South Board Report
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Indiana school counseling programs can pursue the Indiana Gold Star School Counseling Award from the Department of Education. To get the award, school counseling programs must show that they are meeting all of Indiana’s counseling program standards.

To help, the American Student Achievement Institute outlines a nine step self-study process divided into three areas of study: establishing priorities based on student data, assessing counseling resources and then developing a plan of action. Study Area #1) The Advisory Council (i.e., a group of counselors, teachers, principals, parents and community members) establishes program priorities from their vision statement and student achievement, student choice, counseling and guidance data. Achievement data come from the State Department of Education, the Learnmore website and school records. Student choice data are from teacher and student surveys. Counseling and guidance data are from counselor logs, teacher and student surveys. Study Area #2) Available counseling resources are compared to resources needed to meet the Advisory Council’s priorities. Study Area #3) Student goals and activities are developed to meet Advisory Council’s priorities.

The Advisory committee established the following goals. Three of the goals focus on students. The last focuses on counselor time use. Goal #1 is to increase the number of f/r lunch students who graduate with an Academic Honors Diploma. Goal #2 is to increase the number of f/r lunch students who graduate in four years. Goal #3 is to increase the number of students who annually revise their 4-year course plan. The student goals are the same for each high school but each high school is setting goals appropriate to their students. Goal #4 is in counselor time-usage and an action plan outlines changes to reduce management activities and increase student interaction.

As a result of the self study, activities are added to meet the Advisory Council’s program goals. For Bloomington High School North, new strategies include but are not limited to:
• Ongoing student "checks" with every student (grades 9-12) regarding academics, goals, resources for support, and other needs
• Monthly Cougar Den activities related to building friendships, study skills, effective note taking skills, test preparation skills, 4-year academic plans, career interest inventories, resume building, transferable school to work skills, and summer plans brainstorming (volunteer, jobs, camps, etc.)
• List at-risk student populations (cross-referencing academics, attendance, behavior, and socio-economic issues) and meet weekly with these students to create "stay-in-school" supports (counselor, administrator, social worker, stay-in-school coordinator, teacher of record, parents, etc.)
• Semester surveys of entire student body to assess Perceptions Data and yearly assessment of Achievement Data to determine progress of Gold Star and other initiatives
• Run support groups for specific at-risk populations (GLBTQ, racial minorities, pregnant teens, international students ... etc.)
• Support and attend student mentor training (Cougar Leaders) to work with newly transitioning students (grade 9) in Cougar Den and Cougar Prowl to provide a strong foundation of support for these students.
• Work with STAR (Students Taking Academic Responsibility) teachers to determine placement of at-risk students who need remediation for academic success each semester.
• Place students in End of Course Assessment remediation classes to adequately prepare to meet State standards related to core subject area standardized testing.
For Bloomington High School South, new strategies include but are not limited to:

- Meet freshmen individually and conduct career interest interviews with follow-up mid-term grade checks.
- Continue sophomore career interest assessments and career plan development. Expand career interest assessment and career plan development to all juniors during Student Resource Time.
- Refer Early College, 1st Generation and f/r lunch students failing at mid-term to PACE with emphasis on monitoring their Algebra progress.
- Coordinate counseling groups for Early College, 21st Century and 1st generation students.
- Support administration in college campus visits by Early College Students.
- Meet individually with seniors to discuss postsecondary plans and academic progress.
- Academic progress and postsecondary plans/checklists for freshman and seniors are mailed home to parents. Career plans for sophomores and juniors are available for review with parents.

Every three years, both schools will be re-evaluating progress of these activities by repeating the original study.

Having received the Indiana Gold Star Award, both schools are applying for the RAMP (Recognized American School Counseling Model Program) Award, a national recognition of outstanding counseling departments. This award will be given on July 5th, 2010 in Boston at the American School Counseling Association’s annual conference. Representatives from both North and South will be attending.