

Revised May 2010

**SCHOOL
COUNSELING
PROGRAM
HANDBOOK
FOR
ADVISORY
COUNCILS**



**Idaho Division of
Professional-Technical
Education**

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL

PART A: TYPES OF ADVISORY COUNCILS

It is suggested you choose the type of committee best suited for your school and community size and needs.

1. Umbrella Advisory Council - an umbrella advisory council is representative of the community and can be established for several or all programs offered in a school district.
2. Program Advisory Council - a program advisory council is representative of the specific area of school counseling that advises that particular program.

PART B: GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

PURPOSE

The council is a group of laypersons selected by local educational administrators to serve in an advisory capacity to the counseling program. The purpose of the council is to advise school counselors and school administration with respect to the development and maintenance of quality guidance and counseling programs. Properly functioning advisory councils help local schools ensure that programs are consistent with the needs of the students and the community.

The council should be advisory only, having no administrative authority, and is not created to take away any of the rights, and/or privileges of the local governing board and administrative staff.

STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL

1. An advisory council is a group of laypersons who:
 - a. Are recognized for their expertise in their specific occupational area.
 - b. Are representative of the community.
 - c. Are organized to advise school personnel on matters concerning the Counseling Program.
2. The advisory council should be comprised of (if applicable and available):
 - a. Business and industry representatives from the community;
 - b. Parents;
 - c. Teachers;
 - d. School administrator;
 - e. Counselors;
 - f. Member of the local school board;
 - g. Employment and Training program (e.g. Job Service);
 - h. Postsecondary school representative; and
 - i. Tech Prep representative

3. A council should consist of 3-9 members to successfully complete business. Representation on the council should include, as appropriate to the population of the local community, persons of both genders, racial and/or ethnic minorities, special populations, and individuals with disabilities.
4. At the first or second meeting, the council should consider establishing a set of operating policies. See example in PART D: SUGGESTED OPERATING POLICIES FOR COUNSELING ADVISORY COUNCIL.

ORGANIZATION

Effective advisory councils are those whose members are recognized professionals in their areas of responsibility, have an understanding and acceptance of the committee objectives and a desire to accomplish them through teamwork and cooperation.

Constructive planning should be undertaken by educational administrators prior to organizing a council. This will help assure the effectiveness of the council.

After determining the type of council needed and preparing a general structural plan, the administrator should appoint a person to serve as temporary chair. The administrator and/or chair should:

1. Select council members. (See PART D: SECTION B: MEMBERSHIP)
2. Send letters of appointment signed by the appropriate administrator. (See PART E: LETTER OF APPOINTMENT)
3. Call the first meeting, provide time and place, and attach a tentative agenda.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Advisory councils can perform a wide variety of functions. The following list, not intended to be all inclusive, should be useful in providing direction.

1. Provide assistance regarding:
 - a. Current labor market trends.
 - b. The relevance of the program.
 - c. Job and educational opportunities for students and graduates.
 - d. The relationship of basic skills such as problem-solving, communications, mathematics, and employability skills and habits to job and education needs.
2. Determine community needs:
 - a. For work-based learning programs
 - b. For new and emerging occupations
 - c. For in-service of staff
 - d. For Tech Prep initiatives
3. Assist in the preparation and selection of program material to assure it meets the needs of students and reflects industry needs.
 - a. Review program objectives
 - b. Review present activity outlines and resources
 - c. Assist in identifying competencies to be taught
 - d. Suggest revisions or additions
4. Assist with program evaluation activities.
5. Provide in-service opportunities for teachers.

6. Provide support services for students enrolled in nontraditional programs who may need additional assistance.
7. Recommend and assist in obtaining resource personnel and guest speakers.
8. Assist in surveys.
 - a. Determine data to be collected
 - b. Suggest methods of securing data
 - c. Assist in data collection and interpretation.
9. Provide suggestions for public relations activities.
 - a. Participate in exhibits or displays
 - b. Develop plans for recognizing students through the media
 - c. Help prepare and review brochures
 - d. Advise on forms of program promotion
 - e. Become student advocates
10. Help plan special events such as:
 - a. Field trips to industry
 - b. Career day
 - c. Job shadow excursions

In addition to the previous functions, advisory councils may also wish to provide financial and legislative support; help establish scholarships and awards for honor students; support the administration in local appropriations and provide support for state and national legislation affecting school counseling programs.

ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING MEETINGS

- I. COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITIES:
 - a. Select and submit names of potential council members
 - b. Coordinate meeting arrangements
 - c. Develop meeting agenda with the Chair
 - d. Act as Chair for first meeting
 - e. Act as Secretary for first meeting
 - f. Review goals and objectives with the committee
 - g. Provide members with resource materials and information as needed
 - h. Initiate and facilitate discussion during each meeting
 - i. Provide feedback to members on the results of their recommendations
- II. CHAIRPERSON RESPONSIBILITIES:
 - a. Work with the counselor to plan meetings
 - b. Develop meeting agenda with counselor
 - c. Preside over meetings
 - d. Ensure agenda and schedules are followed
 - e. Promote the council's role as an advisory, not policy-making, body
 - f. Help members gain consensus on issues
 - g. Review minutes with the counselor for accuracy
 - h. Represent the advisory council at various official functions

III. COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a. Attend meetings regularly
- b. Respect other council members
- c. Help reach consensus on issues
- d. Maintain objectivity and concentrating on the program's needs
- e. Making recommendations

IV. CONDUCTING THE FIRST MEETING:

The initial meeting is critical. It must establish and maintain the interest and support of council members. Until a chair is selected by the council, the administrator should appoint someone to serve temporarily in this capacity. It is essential that this person contact members, organize and conduct the first meeting. The following checklist will assist in preparing the first meeting.

| CHECKLIST | |
|------------------|---|
| | Select date, time, and location |
| | Plan meeting agenda |
| | Several days in advance, inform each member in writing of the date, time, and place of the meeting. Include the following in mailing. |
| | _____ a. Agenda |
| | _____ b. Maps and directions to meeting |
| | _____ c. Parking information |
| | Send notices to appropriate educational personnel |
| | Arrange for facilities, refreshments, etc |
| | Provide name tags, paper, pens/pencils, agenda, and other materials |
| | Make audiovisual or other equipment arrangements |
| | Follow prepared agenda |
| | Keep a record of proceedings for minutes of the meetings |
| | Thank members by phone or mail after the meeting |
| | Send copies of minutes to members within one week |
| | |
| | |
| | |

- V. CONDUCTING SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS
- a. Start and adjourn on time.
 - b. Clarify the agenda.
 - c. Prepare for the discussion
 - Have the program or purpose organized
 - Prioritize the basic topic
 - Analyze issues or points to be discussed
 - List important discussion questions
 - Check for comfort measures such as:
 - Seating arrangement
 - Temperature - lighting
 - Paper - pencils
 - d. Keep a record of proceeding for minutes of the meeting.
 - e. Set the stage.
 - Create an informal atmosphere to put the group at ease
 - State and clarify the questions, problems or issues
 - Arouse interest; suggest pertinent questions for analysis and discussion
 - f. Follow the agenda.
 - Present all pertinent information
 - Allow for discussion
 - Summarize when necessary
 - Vote on issues which necessitate unity of action
 - g. Direct the discussion.
 - Ask and redirect questions. Keep the discussion moving in a developmental direction
 - Indicate points of agreement and disagreement
 - Give appropriate credit for all relevant ideas
 - Encourage exploration and new suggestions
 - Summarize discussions calling attention to unexplored viewpoints
 - Send copies of minutes to members within one week.
- VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING AGENDAS
- a. First Meeting Agenda
 1. The person designated by the administrator serves as temporary chair and appoints a temporary secretary
 2. Introductions
 3. Explain the concept and functions of an advisory committee
 4. A representative or designate of the Governing Board, (probably the superintendent or member of Board of Trustees), informs the council of its relationship to the school or institution. Distribute copies of the Governing Board's policy
 5. Distribute a sample of the operating policies
 6. Explain of present counseling program, program goals, strengths and weaknesses

7. New business
 8. Determine date, time and place of next meeting
 9. Tour of facilities
 10. Adjourn
- a. Second Meeting Agenda
1. Temporary chair calls meeting to order
 2. Roll call and minutes by temporary secretary
 3. Determine permanent rules of operation, i.e., meeting time, place and dates (see PART D: SUGGESTED OPERATING POLICIES FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING ADVISORY COUNCIL)
 4. Plan long-range program of work
 5. Elect officers
 6. Prioritize future items for consideration
 7. If needed, arrange for executive council meeting before next regular meeting. (See PART D - SECTION D -ARTICLE III)
 8. Adjourn

PART C: SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORIZATION

Authorization for the establishment of a School Counseling Program Advisory Council for the _____ (school/district)

The Board of Trustees of the (school/district) _____ hereby authorizes the establishment of an advisory council for the Counseling Program. The committee will operate as prescribed by the Policy Statement of the _____ Guidance and Counseling Advisory Committee. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to terminate the services of any committee member at any time it feels that such action would be in the best interests of the system.

Date

Board Chair

Date

Superintendent

PART D: SUGGESTED OPERATING POLICIES FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING ADVISORY COUNCILS

SECTION A: PURPOSE

- I. **ARTICLE I:** Define the purposes and duties of the advisory council.
 1. Study the needs of the community and school.
 2. Aid and guide the counseling program.
 3. Help develop and maintain relevant programs.
 4. Offer recommendations for improvement.
 5. Assist in evaluation of the program.
 6. Assist the program in obtaining community support.
 7. Investigate programs in other communities with the idea of encouraging the use of those practices which may be applicable.
 8. Assist in the revision of the objectives of the program if warranted.
 9. Serve as an avenue of communication between the program and community.
 10. Annually evaluate progress made toward stated objectives.
 11. Assist in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.
- II. **ARTICLE II:** This advisory council shall exist only during such time as it may be authorized by the governing Board.
- III. **ARTICLE III:** This advisory committee shall operate only within the limits of the school counseling program for which it has been appointed.

SECTION B: MEMBERSHIP

- I. **ARTICLE I:** Minimum of three and a maximum of nine.
- II. **ARTICLE II:** Members selected to represent a cross-section of the community.
- III. **ARTICLE III:** Members submit names of prospective members to the committee.
- IV. **ARTICLE IV:** Each member is appointed for a term of three years. Except when the position is to fill an unexpired term.
- V. **ARTICLE V:** At least two-thirds of the members will be retained each year.
- VI. **ARTICLE VI:** One-third of the members will be appointed each year.
- VII. **ARTICLE VII:** The term of new members shall begin on (date).
- VIII. **ARTICLE VIII:** A member may forfeit membership on the committee if two successive meetings are missed without presenting, in advance, to the chair of the council a valid reason for absence.
- IX. **ARTICLE IX:** The lead school counselor, or an appropriate designee, is an ex-officio member and is expected to be present at each council meeting.

SECTION C: MEETINGS

- I. **ARTICLE I:** Regular meetings of the advisory council will be held during the academic year. (Twice per year is often adequate for full council meetings. You may have need for more sub-council meetings.)
- II. **ARTICLE II:** Written notices of council meetings shall be mailed to all members (two weeks) before each meeting.

- III. **ARTICLE III:** A tentative agenda shall be prepared and provided council members prior to meeting time.
- IV. **ARTICLE IV:** Meetings shall not be more than two hours long unless a majority of the council members vote to continue a particular meeting beyond that limit.
- V. **ARTICLE V:** A quorum must be present to vote on proposals. A majority of the members is a quorum.

SECTION D: OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

- I. **ARTICLE I:** The officers shall be elected annually by majority vote of the council members at the first meeting.
- II. **ARTICLE II:** The officers shall be a chair, a vice-chair and a secretary.
- III. **ARTICLE III:** The executive council shall consist of the chair, vice chair, secretary and the school counselor. It shall:
 - a. Act on urgent council matters between council meetings.
 - b. Prepare agenda for council meetings when requested.
 - c. Call special meetings of the council as needed.
- IV. **ARTICLE IV:** The Chair shall be elected from among those members who have served on the council for at least one year. Duties shall be:
 - a. Preside at meetings.
 - b. Serve as chair of the executive council.
 - c. Appoint, as the need arises, standing and/or special councils. Members may include persons other than council members.
- V. **ARTICLE V:** The vice chair in the absence of the chair shall perform the duties of the chair and such other duties as delegated.
- VI. **ARTICLE VI:** The secretary shall:
 - a. Keep records of the attendance of members at meetings.
 - b. Keep a record of discussion and recommendations.
 - c. Maintain a permanent record file of committee activities.
 - d. Distribute minutes of council meetings and copies of other council documents to council members, teachers, and others who may be concerned. The secretary shall have the assistance of the instructional and support staff and use of the facilities in performing these functions.

SECTION E: POLICY CHANGES

- I. **ARTICLE I:** These operating policies may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of members at any regular committee meeting or a specially called meeting with a 30-day written notice.

PART E: LETTER OF APPOINTMENT

(Current Date)

Ms. Erin Somer
Personnel Manager
No Name Insurance Company
Your Town, Idaho 88880

Dear Ms. Somer;

This letter is to inform you that your appointment to the __ (school) __ Counseling Advisory Council is effective beginning ____, 20__, and ending ____, 20__.

The (first/next) meeting of the committee will be held in (place) on (date) at (time).

We wish to thank you for your interest as indicated by your acceptance of this committee appointment. We appreciate your willingness to assist us in supporting our school counseling program and the opportunities it provides for our students.

Sincerely,

Administrator and/or Chair of Committee