

# ***Pupil Services***

## ***Position Paper***

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Pennsylvania Association of Pupil Services Administrators  
*Foreword*

This document represents the seventh revision of the PAPSA Pupil Services Position Paper. Its purpose is to serve as a framework for conceptualizing Pupil Services in Pennsylvania.

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# ***Pupil Services Position Paper***

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Appendix B (Pupil Services Role Statements)  
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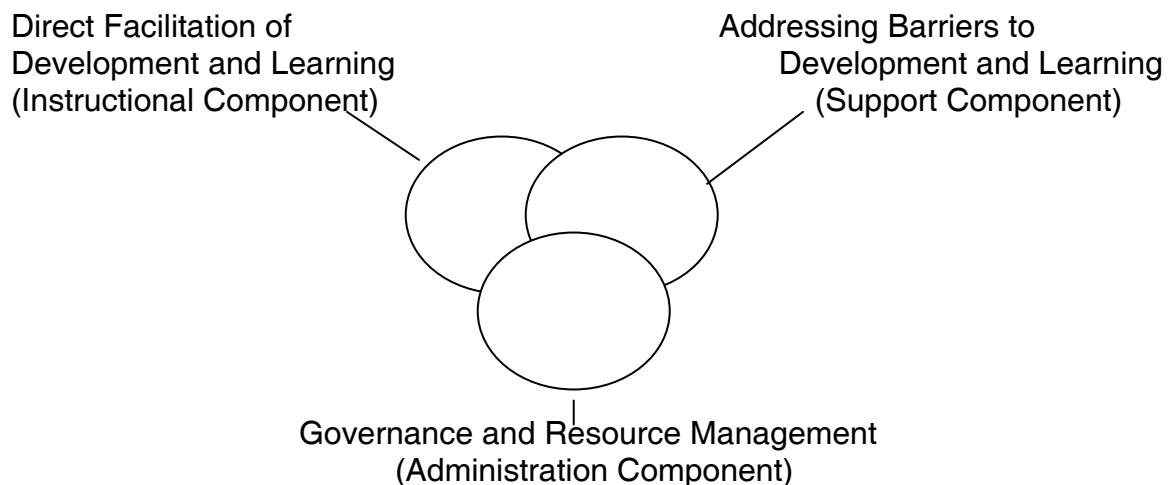
## ***Introduction and Philosophy***

The wide array of services that are now considered Pupil Services began with vocational guidance. Later this was extended to include academic counseling and college placement for high school students. Now, comprehensive programs include but are not limited to counseling, health, psychology and social work.

Pupil Services continue to evolve in response to the changing environment in which children live and develop. New pressures on communities, families and schools have resulted in more at-risk students now than in the past. As a result, Pupil Services now include more collaborative work with other professionals and community agencies. New services such as crisis intervention and planning for behavioral change, not originally provided, have been added. Pupil Services staff members address a myriad of issues including career/educational planning, character education, interpersonal relations, absenteeism, mental and physical health related concerns, students with special learning needs, and school safety issues. As compared to the costs of welfare, chronic unemployment, institutional care or imprisonment, the cost-benefit ratio to society favors the implementation of early intervention and prevention programs by school and community.

The educational system includes the family and the community. The entire community determines the environment in which families and schools exist. Collaboration is essential, involving community and school leaders, agencies, institutions and parents, because student needs must be met in school, community and family settings. The entire community is affected by and needs to support its young people.

The following illustration, adapted from the work of the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools, exemplifies an equal partnership among the administration, instruction and support components of a school system.



## ***Removing the Barriers to Learning***

To ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school, the long range aims of educational leaders and in particular of pupil services administrators must include the development of a comprehensive component to effectively address barriers to learning and teaching. Not only will this enable students to learn and teachers to teach, it will create supportive, positive environments that maximize learning and well-being and help strengthen families and communities.

To achieve all this requires:

- ✓ Formulating policy that supports a comprehensive, multifaceted and cohesive approach for addressing barriers to learning and teaching as an essential component of school improvement and then fully integrating the component into school improvement planning.
- ✓ Working to coordinate, braid and integrate all school resources being used for student/learning supports and all community resources that are relevant to student well-being.
- ✓ Rethinking infrastructure and establishing new mechanisms to facilitate the development, ongoing planning, implementation, evaluation and sustainability of the component for addressing barriers to learning (and promoting healthy development).

What are some of these barriers to learning?

- ✓ Excessive absence and tardiness.
- ✓ Lack of engagement in classroom learning.
- ✓ Bullying and sexual harassment.
- ✓ Inadequate family involvement in children's schooling.
- ✓ Inappropriate referrals for specialized assistance, including special education.
- ✓ Pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.
- ✓ Early termination of attendance (dropout).
- ✓ Misbehavior and resulting suspension/expulsion.

The role of Pupil Services in removing barriers such as those defined above involves adhering to a set of standards no less rigorous than the academic standards which are in effect within the classroom. These standards include the following:

#### Specific Standards for a Learning Support Component:

The following standards are the direct responsibility of the Pupil Services staff, programs and services.

Standard 1a: Continuous enhancement of regular classroom strategies to enable learning.

Standard 1b: Continuous enhancement of programs and systems for a full range of transition supports.

Standard 1c: Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to increase and strengthen home and school connections.

Standard 1d: Continuous enhancement of programs and systems for responding to, and where feasible, preventing school and personal crises.

Standard 1e: Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to increase and strengthen community involvement and support.

Standard 1f: Continuous enhancement of programs and systems to facilitate student and family access to effective services and special assistance as needed.

The following standards require active involvement by Pupil Services staff in cooperation with administration, instruction, home and community.

Standard 2: Establishment of an integrated infrastructure framework for a comprehensive, multifaceted and cohesive component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching.

Standard 3: Appropriate resource use and allocation for developing, maintaining and evolving the component.

Standard 4: Capacity building for developing, maintaining and evolving the component.

Standard 5: Formative and summative evaluation and accountability are fully integrated into all planning and implementation.

The content of this section has drawn extensively on material supplied by the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools and particularly the writings of Dr. Howard Adelman and Dr. Linda Taylor, co-directors of the Center. Persons interested in more detail concerning the work of the Center are encouraged to access its web site at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>.



## ***Pupil Services: Belief Statements***

As educators, Pupil Services personnel share the goals and objectives of all educators and are guided by the following beliefs:

- Pupils are viewed holistically; that is, they are human beings with complex needs and interests which extend beyond the educational system. Cultural, physical, social and emotional factors are all important.
- Each student has unique characteristics.
- Child development is an orderly developmental process.
- Pupils are in a constant state of change which requires adaptability and flexibility on the part of all educators.
- Schools do not function in isolation but are part of an increasingly complex social structure which demands more of the learner than just the mastery of cognitive skills.
- Effective education results in a person who can adapt to as well as contribute to the changing environment.
- Learning is a lifelong process.
- Effective education develops:
  - self-understanding and a feeling of self-worth.
  - an understanding of others and an appreciation of the worth of all people.
  - the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for successful personal and family living.
  - the knowledge and practices necessary to maintain physical and emotional well-being.
  - the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to become a self-supporting member of society.

## ***Team Concept***

The diversity within Pupil Services encourages the resolution of student issues through a team approach. The Pupil Services administrator provides the district leadership to coordinate all student centered teams within the district. Considering the complexities of services, many types of teams have evolved to address the diverse needs presented. Teams may include the expertise of Pupil Services staff and other educational specialists, as well as parents, guardians and community agency representatives. Each team recognizes the specialized training that is brought to the team by the individual members.

The team focuses upon the child as a learner. Issues and problems may differ between the elementary and secondary levels; however, the basic operating procedures and the team processes are essentially the same. Analysis of data, consensus building, action planning, and monitoring student progress are essential elements of any team's operation. The team makes recommendations and decisions regarding the student's eligibility for support services, alternative educational programs, and/or other appropriate interventions within the school and community.

Essential to the functioning of the team is the appointment of a team leader and a case manager for each student served. Pupil Services specialists provide the following:

- medical, social, developmental and educational history
- cognitive, physical, affective and behavioral assessment and evaluation
- interpretations of information contained in students' school records
- development of intervention plans
- monitoring of student progress
- liaison for community referrals
- facilitation of student and parent groups
- structured follow-up for each student

# ***Conceptual Framework***

Pupil Services are coordinated programs of specialized services to students and families. Though the variety of services offered will differ from school to school depending upon its size and the needs of its students, the following categories of services are typically present to some degree:

## **I. Developmental Services**

Developmental services include counseling, psychological services, health services, home and school visitor services and social work services that support students in addressing their academic, behavioral, health, personal and social development issues. \*

## **II. Diagnostic, Intervention and Referral Services**

Pupil services staff use diagnostic services to identify barriers that limit a student's success in school. Intervention services actively engage pupil services staff in activities planned to eliminate specific barriers to student success. Pupil services staff may arrange for referrals to other school-based or school-linked professionals or may refer parents and guardians to appropriate community-based services for assistance. \*

## **III. Consultation and Coordination Services**

Consultation services are used by pupil services staff, in partnership with parents or guardians, to obtain assistance to address barriers and issues that are outside the scope of the student services professional. Consultation and coordination services may be used to assist in the diagnosis, intervention or referral of students who face barriers to success. Coordination services connect school resources with other available resources to assist students in meeting their educational objectives. \*

## **IV. Other Services**

Pupil Services personnel fulfill a variety of other functions in the school district, which contribute to the effectiveness of the system.

Each of the categories is described in greater detail on the following pages.

\* The definitions under the first three categories have been adapted from Chapter 12 Regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education; Subsection 12.41(b).

# ***Description of Services***

## **I. Developmental Services**

Direct services are provided by Pupil Services staff and are designed for *all* students. They include activities and processes to facilitate the normal development of students.

### **Orientation**

Information is provided to groups of students to ease the transition into new situations. Examples include new student, elementary, junior high/middle school, and high school orientations.

### **Academic Counseling**

Students are assisted in course selection, determining appropriate placement, and matching various styles of learning to appropriate instruction. Response to Instruction and Intervention components also fall within this category.

### **Student Evaluation**

A system must be in place to monitor student performance and progress and to develop a plan when a particular individual is experiencing frustration and academic failure.

### **Health Appraisals**

Periodic appraisals are conducted to monitor normal development and to determine the absence of disease. Such appraisals include height, weight, vision, hearing, scoliosis, body mass index and dental hygiene.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Attendance patterns are reviewed. Regular attendance is encouraged and reinforced. If nonattendance becomes an issue, appropriate referrals are made.

### **Career Development**

Total development of the student includes the ability to make appropriate postsecondary plans. Competencies are developed in areas of self-knowledge, career planning, and educational/vocational development. Pupil Services assist in accomplishing these goals through individual or group counseling and instruction in the use of technology-assisted career exploration.

### **Resiliency and Wellness**

Initiating and promoting programs and activities for all students which develop positive coping skills and support healthy behaviors are functions of the Pupil Services staff.

## **II. Diagnostic, Intervention and Referral Services**

Direct services to individual students are needed in the schools. These services are handled by the Pupil Services staff in each school and are designed to help *each* student succeed in the school program.

### **Counseling**

Counseling of individuals and groups occurs in a variety of contexts. Examples are personal and social development, educational planning, and coping with specific life situations.

### **Assessment**

Assessments through interviews, observation, testing and surveys may be used to identify specific strengths and weaknesses and to determine appropriate educational interventions and services.

### **Intervention**

When the assessment indicates, appropriate intervention services may be provided to the student by school staff or by other professionals as arranged by the school team. Instructional Support Teams, Student Assistance Teams, or Crisis Intervention Teams are most frequently involved in providing this service for students who are exhibiting signs of depression, chemical abuse, academic difficulties, being bullied or other behaviors that are harmful. Also included in this category is the management of crisis situations in the school, including the coordination of community support services in the school in the time of crisis.

### **Placement**

Pupil Services staff members are usually responsible for placing students in the educational setting that is most appropriate for meeting the students' needs. In addition to regular education schedule changes, this could involve placement in a special education program, Title I program, homebound instruction, alternative education, specialized tutoring, or Chapter 15 services.

### **Community Referral**

When the needs of a student extend beyond the available services of the school, referral to community resources may be appropriate. Community agency support, medical services, or residential services may result from such referrals. School assessment and intervention services are explored before such referrals are made.

## **III. Consultation and Coordination Services**

Some activities do not involve direct services to students; rather they are designed to facilitate the development and progress of students by consultation with school staff and parents or by coordination with other agencies or individuals.

### **Case Management**

Services must be coordinated and responsibility assigned for each student. A Pupil Services staff or team member may be assigned the role of case manager for every student receiving services.

### **Community Liaison**

Pupil Services extend into the community to discover, promote and draw upon local resources which provide services to students, i.e., serving on an advisory board or making public presentations.

### **Consultation**

By virtue of their expertise in human relations, Pupil Services staff may advise in the areas of curriculum development, instructional processes, human growth and development, learning and behavior issues, and other emerging issues.

### **Home/Family Communication**

Pupil Services staff facilitate communication and coordination between home and school through such activities as home visitation, parent conferences, and providing workshops or information sessions.

### **Staff Development**

Pupil Services staff seek to acquire the most current information in their field to enlarge their own knowledge bases and skills and to share their expertise with other staff. This role may take the form of advising administration or providing inservice and other training to administrators and staff.

**Parent Education**

Promoting student progress requires that parents be well informed about the parental role in student success. Pupil Services staff conduct parent seminars or clinics on a variety of subjects.

**IV. Other Services****Record Maintenance**

An accurate set of school records is kept for all students. Pupil Services responsibilities include the monitoring, collection, maintenance and dissemination of records as well as the protection of the confidentiality of the records.

**Research/Evaluation**

Research and evaluation are ongoing responsibilities of Pupil Services. They involve activities such as attitude surveys, follow-up studies, and analysis of student test performance. They may include a review of group performance records to develop longitudinal data or a formalized research project.

**Policy Recommendations**

Pupil Services staff assist in the development of policies and procedures in areas that directly affect students.

**School Environment Assessment**

Pupil Services staff monitor the school environment for the physical safety and social and emotional health of students and staff.

## ***Relationships to Other Programs and Services***

Pupil Services are an integral part of the educational process in its involvement with initiatives, which may extend beyond the roles already described herein. While Section 12.41 of State Board Regulations (pertaining to Student Services) establishes the four basic components of Pupil Services as counseling, health, psychology and social work, other programs such as child accounting, homebound instruction, student assistance, and safe and drug-free schools and communities are often administered through the Pupil Services department.

Some districts see programs for exceptional children as primarily instructional and, therefore, as part of the curriculum department. In other districts the high degree of interaction between special education personnel and Pupil Services staff has resulted in an organizational plan where the programs for exceptional children are part of the Pupil Services department. This decision is made most appropriately at the district level.

Programs aimed at “drop out” prevention, substance abuse prevention, pregnant and parenting teens and other “at risk” students often do not fit into the existing administrative structure of the district. Many of them deal concurrently with curriculum issues, administrative issues, and Pupil Services issues. This makes it difficult to determine which department should be responsible for operating these programs. Pupil Services departments have a responsibility for initiating and developing such programs when they are necessary to meet the special needs of students. Once the programs are established and operational, some aspects should continue to be served by the Pupil Services staff while other aspects should be moved into more appropriate departments. This conceptualization helps to support those directors who need to initiate such programs in their schools but believe that the programs should operate outside the Pupil Services department.



## ***The Administrator of Pupil Services***

It is essential that one professionally qualified and appropriately certificated person be appointed as the Pupil Services administrator with district-wide responsibilities in order to assure coordination of the various Pupil Services functions and other services in the school. This position should be full time when the number of Pupil Services staff members equals 15 to 20.

The role definition for the administrator of Pupil Services includes the following responsibilities. The administrator of Pupil Services:

- is directly responsible to the chief school administrator for the development, coordination and evaluation of all activities which are included in the program. Responsibility is shared with other administrators for the selection, supervision and evaluation of Pupil Services staff.
- is a member of the superintendent's central office administrative staff.
- is responsible for program development and staff development within the department and with the total staff in areas directly related to Pupil Services.
- is responsible for the clinical and programmatic supervision of the following services: psychology, counseling, health, attendance and social work. Please refer to the appendix for details regarding the role and function of each of these areas. An important function at the central office level in the operation of Pupil Services programs in a school district is the provision of "Clinical Supervision." In this context, the term is defined as follows:

Clinical supervision, in an educational setting, is a systematic process through which a Pupil Services staff member receives consultation and feedback in the planning and delivery of appropriate interventions for students and families to assure quality services. This type of supportive supervision should be provided by a professional person who has training and experience in Pupil Services. The process should contribute to the Individual's professional growth and improvement of performance and should not be part of the employee evaluation system.

- participates in and contributes to district-level curricular and administrative activities and is represented in building level activities.

- is responsible for the development of policies and procedures related to the delivery of Pupil Services.
- is responsible for the coordinated functioning of the various disciplines into a working team.
- provides leadership in designing and implementing research activities in the educational setting.

# ***Staffing Considerations***

## **Professional Staff**

In the past, Pupil Services programs have consisted of a cluster of discrete services provided by particular groups of certified specialists within the school system. The programs provided by school psychologists, school counselors, social workers and school nurses collectively were considered to define the Pupil Services program.

In this position paper, we have reconceptualized these distinct areas and focused on the types of services provided rather than the type of certificate that a professional staff member holds. Several overlapping areas have developed in the specialty categories. For example, nurses are sometimes involved in counseling, counselors may make home visits, social workers may do group counseling, and psychologists may become involved with family dynamics. This allows for greater program flexibility and broader role definition among the professional groups.

This conceptualization is not intended to deny the need for certification or specialization within the Pupil Services functions. However, it allows for the collaborative interchange of roles. This concept relies heavily on the team approach since the members of the team should determine which professionals can provide the services that are necessary for an individual or group of students.

## **Para-professional Staff**

Pupil Services programs can be supplemented and enhanced by including para-professionals who serve specific student needs. The para-professional staff members do not take on the responsibilities normally associated with the professional staff. Each of the professional groups can make use of para-professional staff members to support their professional responsibilities.

## **Staff Ratios**

Previous editions of this paper have included ratios of particular certificate areas to the number of individual students served. With the increased emphasis on a coordinated approach to student concerns, role specificity among team members takes on less importance. However, since we are recommending a more flexible, team-centered approach, it is appropriate to recommend that a specific staff ratio be considered when professional staff members may overlap in these services.

Since school nurses have specific legal mandate in The Pennsylvania School Code to provide services to a certain number of students, the school nurse recommendations are addressed separately from the other workers. therefore, it is recommended that a school nurse be assigned to approximately 1,000 students and that no nurse may be assigned to more than 1,500 students. Also, where other Pupil Services staff are concerned, a total of Pupil Services workers to allow for a ratio of one Pupil services worker to every 200 secondary students and one Pupil Services worker to every 300 elementary students is recommended, exclusive of the school nursing services.

## ***Related Issues***

The rapidly changing environment of the late 20th century has produced an ever-increasing number of emerging issues that require the attention of Pupil Services staff. Both in the areas of initial training and of continuing professional development, substantive changes will be necessary for the effective preparation of the Pupil Services specialists who must be ready to address these issues in a proactive manner. Despite the formidable aspects of the increased demands upon the Pupil Services program, the growth of these issues will inevitably expand the need for such services in every school.

Among the issues of critical interest to the Pupil Services professional are the following:

- *Chapter 15/Section 504 Issues* including identification, negotiating service agreements, and monitoring.
- *Special Education Issues* including transition planning, incarcerated youth, discipline, behavior management, assessment and identification, early intervention, and legislative and legal decisions.
- *Fiscal Issues* including shrinking budgets, personnel cuts, services to nonpublic schools, availability of medical assistance funds to schools (ACCESS, EPSDT), and sufficient administrative leadership.
- *Violence-Related Issues* including sexual harassment, peer mediation, conflict resolution, increased availability of weapons, bullying and gang activities.
- *Multicultural Issues* including social bias, provision of services to ESL students, and the need for sensitivity to and understanding of cultural minorities.
- *Changing Curriculum Issues* including the effects and challenges of Chapter 4, gifted education, strategic planning, technology preparation programs, home schooling, the implications of year round education, and inclusion.
- *Assessment Issues* including increased parental referrals, changing state assessment system, challenges to the fairness of standardized testing, and authentic portfolio and curriculum-based assessments.
- *Pre-referral Intervention/Student Assistance Program Issues* including pre-referral procedures, intervention design, and expanded programs such as Response to Instruction and Intervention.

- *Family Issues* including changing family structure, dysfunctional families, and the homeless.
- *Community Issues* including liaison, coordinated services, effective use of resources, and school-based community services.
- *Chapter 16* including programs and services for gifted students.
- *Reform Initiatives* including No Child Left behind at the federal level and at the state level such initiatives as PAGE1, PVAAS, Project 720, Academic Standards, and PSSA testing.
- *Other Issues* including adolescent sexual activity, AIDS and its related implications, substance abuse, IDEA, and ADA.