

Assignment 5 Job Shadow Interview

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Background

The purpose of this interview is for the students in this program to gain some knowledge about what job duties and different situations counselors will come across during their career. I reached out to a school counselor named Midge Eck who works for Merced Union High School District. I reached out to Ms. Eck because she has over 30 years of experience as a school counselor and has multiple degrees in different subjects such as psychology as well as student counseling. Ms. Eck currently works with 11th and 12th graders at Yosemite high school in Merced, California.

I was able to interview Ms. Eck on August 8, 2022. The campus does not start until later in the month in August; however, I was able to watch her interact with some of the students by giving them schedules and showing them their classes on campus. The counselors had everyone's schedule in a box alphabetically and when a student came up to them, they handed out their packets and schedules. They also did a quick tour of the campus for the incoming students and introduced themselves.

Job Duties as a Counselor

Ms. Eck said the following job duties as a school counselor for the Merced district include: "Meeting with students and parents to discuss and develop an academic program for the student. Hold conferences with students who exhibit academic, social, and or emotional problems. Recommends and arranges education and special programs and placements for students in consultation with parents, teachers, and administrators. Investigates attendance patterns of students and recommends correct action. Supervise the administrative tests as assigned. Discusses college application and scholarship information with students parents and

staff. Collaborates with other certificated personnel and community agencies to resolve students' problems. Communication with parents regarding the progress of students." "Supervises students as directed by the principal or assistant principal. Abides all policies of the Board of Trustees and other duties as assigned by the assistant principal. "

Questions and Answers

Ask about the primary duties or focus of the counselor's job. Does he or she have a chance to work with students either or individual or in groups? Does the counselor follow the ASSCA model? Why or Why Not? Ms. Eck stays "The school is a continuation school. We serve students who are 16 years of age or older. We are primarily grades 11th and 12th. Our enrollment tops out at 350 students but there is constant change. The school provides the students with an opportunity to earn credits towards high school graduation. Most of the students are screened to the school because they have failed too many classes, or they were suspended or expelled from traditional high school. Therefore, the primary task of the school counselor is to provide social-emotional support. In addition, the counselor is responsible for making certain the student is taking all classes required for graduation. The counselor at an alternative education site is scheduling students for classes daily. A student completes a class and earns their five credits, they student is moved to another class that week. Daily meetings are held with students who exhibit academic, social and/or emotional issues. The counselor maintains an open-door policy and works closely with the teachers to identify students who need intervention. Groups are held in the classrooms to go over career/vocational objectives. This is done quarterly with the assistance of the classroom teachers. We work with outside agencies

such as County Human Services, Child Protective Services, Community College, and Mental Health. We hold parent conferences to update the parents on student's progress. It is difficult to bring parents into the school due to lack of transportation, no childcare, or the parent(s) have had negative experiences. I tell the students that experiences themselves are fearful or intimidated of the school system. We are instrumental in scheduling a career fair every year and we bring in community speakers. We must provide a training every year, to the teachers and staff, on making suspected child abuse reports to CPS. During the spring semester, we assist students who are seniors in applying for financial aid for community college or vocational schools. I also must attend IEP meetings and assist with developing 504 plans for the students. We use the ASCA National Model as a template for the district counseling program. The guidance program follows the California Standards for the School Counseling Profession.”

Question Two

Ask about how confidentiality issues if the counselor had to disclose confidential information in order to protect someone from harm?

Ms. Eck said “At the beginning of each semester (we have a turnover of students), I go to each classroom and introduce myself. I tell the students how to access me and the services I provide. We talk about confidentiality, and I am clear that, if I think they are a danger to themselves or others, confidentiality does not exist. I am a mandated reporter. The students are clever. They will ask if I must report if they have a "friend" who is going to self-harm. I tell them that, as a "friend" to that individual, he/she may want to make sure the friend is safe. I have not had issues with students and confidentiality. I have had to draw boundaries with teachers and administrators. Also, as counselors, we were told we had to log visits on our computers and the reasons why the student was being seen. The counselors, in the district, refused to indicate

why the student was being seen. The district provided us with a counselor's screen which can only be accessed by another counselor. This is important in providing continuity for students who may transfer to other schools within the district."

Question 3

Ask about their use of data or if how the job has changed over the years?

Ms. Eck says "The district is now hiring licensed clinicians due to data provided by counselors on the issues being presented by students. I am a licensed clinician so there was no additional staff added on our campus."

Question 4

Ask if he or she other counselors have the opportunity to affect change within the school setting. Provide an example if possible.

I, fortunately, work with staff who want to work with our population. I hold meetings with teachers, once a month, to staff various students. I also have an open-door policy with teachers, and we discuss the students, often their dysfunctional home lives and what interventions are appropriate for the students.

Question 5

Ask about the school demographics and any specific challenges of working with diverse populations

Ms. Eck says "The students at our school come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Every student qualifies for free or reduced lunch. Our campus is open during the summer for food distribution. The staff at our school try to equalize the playing field. The students are

rewarded for good attendance and grades quarterly. There are field trips and, often times, these are new experience for the students. At the traditional school site, they were not included in many activities because their GPA's were so low and enrollment at the traditional campuses is high. Classroom sizes are immense. Our ration of teacher to students is 1 to 22. Our staff know the students by name. We have sports tournaments with other alternative ed campuses. We bring tutors in from the community college and the UC. The tutors come from diverse backgrounds also,” Ms. Eck also says “ Yosemite High School 1% American Indian 1% Asian, 80S% Hispanic, 9% white, 2% other, 41% female, 59% male, 23 credentialed teachers and the graduation rate is about 80%. Many students return to traditional high school in the last semester of their senior year to graduate.”

Question 6

What are the major the social end emotional issues that children or adolescents are experiencing and how the counselor works with those issues.

Ms. Eck says “Poverty (like no food or no housing), substance abuse, neglect, child abuse, teen pregnancy, anxiety, depression, parent/child conflicts, inadequate parenting. I refer them to outside agencies if necessary. If the student comes with a crisis istuatin, I assess them for self-harm, domestic violence, child abuse. I contact mental health or CPS. I have good relationships with theclinicians in outside agencies.”

Question 7

What challenges has the counselor experienced in dealing with ethical and legal issues within the job,

Ms. Eck says “I maintain high ethical standards. I strongly advocate for my students. Any questions regarding the legality of something, I consult with the guidance department administrator and/or the union counsel.”

Conclusion

This interview process was important because it helped me understand the job duties of a school counselor. I have worked at a continuation school here in Sacramento, CA. I did not realize all the duties the counselors do at a continuation school. I was pleased to see that most of the students return to their normal high school to graduate. Every school will be different and have different issues to deal with. My main concern is to be the best school counselor I can be and help as many students as I can like the school counselor I interviewed.