

**CODIFICATION REFERENCE NUMBER: 5550**

**DATE:** August 18, 2009

**DISAFFECTED PUPILS**

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will be responsible for the implementation, supervision, and evaluation of these procedures.

**PROCEDURES:**

See attached procedures.

**DISAFFECTED PUPILS**

**PROGRAM**

**Grades 6-12**

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Bernards Township School system is committed to developing each student's learning potential to the fullest extent possible. The school system recognizes that a single system of education and one approach to learning is not appropriate for all students. Our School District wishes to serve students whose performance is hindered by disaffection from school. The Board will make reasonable efforts to identify and serve disaffected students.

A disaffected student may be a student with difficulty functioning properly within a traditional school program; a student of average or above average intelligence and ability who achieves below his or her potential; a student who is unable to establish and achieve short term and long term goals; a student with a pattern of behavior problems; a student who lacks interest, motivation, direction, and problem solving skills; or a student who has very low self-esteem. The Board of Education recognizes that factors unrelated to school often impinge on the student's ability to learn and make the learning process of secondary importance to that individual.

The Board of Education recognizes that the disaffected student may be helped by focused counseling as well as ongoing intervention and support to meet with success in an academic program. The delivery of these services will focus on student accountability for academic performance.

The 6-12 program for disaffected students provides ongoing support to students through academic assistance, counseling, and parent education.

## 6-12 DISAFFECTED PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- I. In improving "self-concept," each student will demonstrate increased competence in:
  - **RECOGNIZING** individual strengths and abilities,
  - **DEVELOPING** personal self-acceptance, and
  - **ACCEPTING** responsibility for his/her behavior.
  
- II. In developing a "positive attitude toward learning," a student will demonstrate:
  - An understanding of the relationship between **EFFORT** and **OUTCOME**,
  - An understanding of the relationship between **LEARNING** and **FUTURE GOALS**,
  - An understanding of the importance of **MASTERING BASIC SKILLS**, and
  - **CONFIDENCE** in his/her ability to learn.
  
- III. In strengthening the "desire and ability to function within society," a student will demonstrate the ability to:
  - **DEVELOP** an attitude of respect and caring for others,
  - **LEARN** how to cope with a structured society such as family, school, government, and work,
  - **CHANNEL** emotions in constructive directions, and
  - **COMMUNICATE** effectively with peers and adults.
  
- IV. In developing "strategies which will increase the likelihood of academic success," students will demonstrate:
  - **CONSISTENT** class attendance,
  - **COMPLETED** work assignments,
  - **ACTIVE** class participation,
  - **APPROPRIATE** organizational and study skills, and
  - **IMPROVED** grades.

# **DISAFFECTED PUPILS**

## **Program Procedures**

### **Grades 6-12**

#### **I. GRADES 6-8**

##### **A. IDENTIFICATION/ASSESSMENT:**

1. Disaffected students in the middle school will be identified by teachers, guidance counselors, and parents who note one or more of the following signs of disaffection:
  - Academic achievement below potential indicated by standardized achievement and aptitude test scores;
  - Disorganization;
  - Poor study skills;
  - Noncompliant/aggressive behavior;
  - Social withdrawal;
  - External locus of control; and/or
  - Excessive absenteeism or truancy.
2. A student who shows signs of disaffection will be referred to his/her guidance counselor, who will take the following steps to assess and clarify the student's problem in school.
  - Review the student's records (grades, test scores, attendance record, past interventions/outcomes, past CST involvement, medical history);
  - Conduct a student interview;
  - Contact the parents; and
  - Conduct an Academic Team meeting.

##### **B. INTERVENTION:**

1. Guidance counselors will meet with teachers to discuss program adjustments/schedule changes to meet the needs of students identified as disaffected.
2. Guidance counselors will continue to follow the progress of the student through:
  - Academic Team meetings;
  - Student conferences and support; and
  - Home-school communication.
3. The disaffected student will be followed at monthly Intervention Meetings\*.

## **C. EVALUATION:**

1. Guidance counselors will monitor the progress of disaffected students through feedback (grades and test scores) from teachers.
2. Guidance counselors will continue to communicate with parents.
3. If there is inadequate improvement after careful evaluation by teachers, guidance counselors and the Intervention Committee, a student may be referred to the Child Study Team for evaluation.

### **\* INTERVENTION MEETING PARTICIPANTS:**

- Administration
- Guidance Counselors
- Child Study Team Members
- Resource Room Teachers
- Classroom Teacher
- Student Assistance Counselor
- Basic Skills Teacher

## **II. GRADES 9-12**

### **A. IDENTIFICATION/ASSESSMENT:**

1. Guidance counselors, teachers, and parents will identify disaffected students according to the following criteria:
  - Two or more grades of “E” or “D;”
  - Drop in school performance;
  - Academic achievement below expected potential based on test scores;
  - Class cutting, excessive absenteeism and/or truancy;
  - Inability to articulate educational or occupational goals;
  - Noncompliance with school rules; and/or
  - Lack of appropriate social skills.
2. Guidance counselors will collect data on students identified as disaffected and present the data to the intervention team. The data will include:
  - Standardized test scores;
  - Report card grades;
  - School record (attendance, past interventions/outcomes, medical history; and/or
  - Teacher anecdotes.
3. The guidance counselor and the MAP Coordinator will decide if the student will be placed in the Motivating Adolescent Performance (MAP) program. Each participant in the MAP program will be expected to:
  - IMPROVE their self-concept;
  - DEVELOP a positive attitude toward learning;

- STRENGTHEN the desire and ability to function within society; and
- DEVELOP strategies which will increase the likelihood of academic success.

## **B. INTERVENTION:**

1. The MAP coordinator will design an individual intervention plan for each MAP student which may include the following:

- Small group interventions for one period three times a week with an emphasis on developing self-esteem, clarifying values, developing social skills, developing internal locus of control, improving study skills, and developing social decision making and problem solving skills;
- Individual counseling as needed using a cognitive-behavioral solving approach;
- Consultation with parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and administration to develop intervention plans; and
- Referral to community agencies and private practitioners for counseling and/or tutoring as needed.

2. The MAP coordinator will be responsible for:

- Providing small group interventions three days a week for six periods each day;
- Providing individual counseling as needed two days a week;
- Consulting with parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators; and
- Referring students for private counseling and tutoring as needed.

## **C. EVALUATION:**

- The MAP coordinator will annually, in June, evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions based on the students' grades, change in self-esteem as measured by the "Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory," frequency of student involvement in disciplinary incidents, and the students' evaluation of the Motivating Adolescent Program.
- Students who do not appear to benefit from the MAP program after two semesters may be referred to the Child Study Team.

## **I. PROCEDURES TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL DROPOUTS:**

In all of our schools, we have counselors who work with the school nurse, teachers, substance awareness coordinator, the child study team, and administrator. As a team, these professional staff members are always consciously aware of potential drop outs or conditions which may eventually contribute to a student dropping out. These service providers assess the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of each student.

## **II. STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WHO MAY BE POTENTIAL DROPOUTS:**

### **INTERVENTION**

Where appropriate, the guidance counselor, nurse, teacher, child study team member, substance awareness coordinator, and principal act as an intervention unit and try to address a student's needs before they can cause a student to drop out.

### **COUNSELING**

We have counselor coverage at all grade levels. Counseling sessions are held with students parents not only on academic problems but also on those circumstances that may cause a student to become disaffected. Students of families that are dysfunctional are frequently supported by counseling.

The objectives of such counseling sessions are:

- To improve student self concept;
- To develop a positive attitude toward learning;
- To strengthen the student's desire and ability to function in school and the broader society; and
- To develop personal strategies for successful academic performance.

### **PROGRAM FOR MOTIVATING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (MAP)**

A pilot program for addressing disaffected students was started in January, 1989. The program continues this year. This formal professional attempt to address disaffected students has adopted a philosophy, goals and objectives, outlined its operating structure, and established procedures for identifying qualified students.

### **III.PROCESS:**

Each year as part of our guidance orientation, information on problematic students is shared with appropriate staff members. Principals as well as counselors play key roles in alerting next year's educators to the needs of these students and the parents.

If all of the above does not prove fruitful, at Ridge we do the following:

#### **PRIOR TO WITHDRAWAL:**

1. Students (and parents of students, unless they refuse to become involved) contemplating withdrawal from high school are counseled by their guidance counselors at least once in a comprehensive way:
  - a. Anecdotal from teachers are solicited and reviewed.
  - b. Past grades and current grades are reviewed.
  - c. Student's short-range and long-term goals and plans are discussed.
  - d. Real vs. convenient reasons for withdrawals are discussed.
2. Students contemplating withdrawal are also asked to confer with one member of the Child Study Team, who, in turn, advises the guidance counselor as well as the student as to the wisdom of the contemplated withdrawal.
3. The possibility of referral to the Child Study Team is discussed by guidance counselor, child study team member, student, and parent.
4. The Intervention Committee (broad-based and made up of counselors, child study team members, nurse, assistant principal, and principal(s) discusses this latest development in the student's educational experience. By this time, most students contemplating withdrawal have already come to the attention of this committee as in need of some kind of helpful intervention.
5. Agencies outside of the school are considered by the counselor and other professionals as a source of help to student.

#### **AT THE TIME OF WITHDRAWAL:**

1. Written permission by the parent of students between the ages of 16 and 18 must be on file.
2. The student is counseled by the guidance counselor regarding his right to re-enter before the age of 20 in order to earn the diploma.
3. Alternate means of earning a high school diploma are thoroughly discussed.
4. The attached form is used by the student to effect the withdrawal.

**AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL:**

1. An on-going drop out file is kept in the Guidance Department, containing copies of the permanent record card and any other pertinent information.
2. If at a later date, the student re-enters Ridge High School, or if Ridge receives confirmation of enrollment at another high school, this form is removed from the drop out file and the permanent record is updated.

