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GUIDANCE AS A PART OF THE
BRIDGEPORT HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

GUIDANCE AS A PART
OF THE
BRIDGEPORT HIGH SCHOOL
CURRICULUM

* * * * *

A Substantial Paper
Presented To
Dr. Rudolph D. Anfinson
Eastern Illinois University

* * * * *

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree
Master of Science in Education

* * * * *

by
Donald W. Ferguson

July, 1958

PRÉFACE

Guidance services at the Bridgeport Township High School have been limited and not an organized part of the curriculum. Granted, most any curriculum contains some type of guidance services, but these do not constitute a guidance program. The aggregate sum of the parts does not necessarily constitute a whole.

The purpose of this paper is to summarize the existing services, as of school year 1956-1957, and to justify the incorporation of a functional guidance program. Many specifics in the guidance program will be on an experimental basis until a full-type program is developed around the particular needs of the particular community. Consequently, this paper will not attempt to deal with definite time allotment and personnel needed as experience in most cases can determine these. Likewise, it seems better that the various guidance services be adopted as they are needed. A going program demands that changes will be continually taking place, if for no other reason than to keep pace with our constantly changing society.

The writer wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to Dr. Rudolph D. Anfinson, his advisor and to Dr. Gerhard C. Matzner for their corrections and help given in preparing this final manuscript.

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL

As the name, Bridgeport Township High School, implies, the school district contains both town and country. Bridgeport, a town of approximately 2300 people, is located in southeastern Illinois. It became prominent in Illinois in the early 1900's with the development of one of the first oil fields in the state. With an influx of migrant workers, the town grew from a population of 400 to 5000 people by about 1910. These migrant workers came primarily from Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania. When the initial exploration for oil and the laying of pipelines was completed, many of the migrant oilworkers moved west. The character of the population has changed little in the last two decades. The ancestry of the majority of people may be traced to the east or southeastern part of the United States.



The production of petroleum oil, the pipeline industry, and an oil refinery at Lawrenceville, 4 miles east of Bridgeport, have provided the majority of the job opportunities in the community. Other jobs that exist include the normal types of employment found in any small agrarian town.

The school district outside of Bridgeport is composed of a little over one hundred fifty square miles. Those who reside in this

area are mainly farmers and oil workers. The farms are about average in fertility, with the poorer land lying in the southern part of the district. The size of the farms range from a few acres to several hundred. About one-half of the farm operators are tenant farmers.

Approximately four hundred students are enrolled in the Bridgeport Township High School. This number has changed little over the years as Table 1 would seem to suggest. The average number of graduates from 1945-47 was eighty, the same number as in the years from 1955-57. No outstanding growth is foreseen in coming years.

TABLE 1
Size of the Freshman Classes at the Bridgeport Township High School,
Per Cent Graduating and Totals of Graduating Class of Years 1944 to 1957.

Year	Size of Freshman Class	Per Cent of Class Graduating	Size of Grad.Class
1944-45	134	60%	80
1945-46	90	88%	79
1946-47	92	87%	80
1947-48	120	77%	93
1948-49	114	64%	73
1949-50	115	85%	98
1950-51	92	74%	68
1951-52	115	81%	93
1952-53	108	76%	82
1953-54	123	73%	90
1954-55	118	72%	85
1955-56	115	69%	79
1956-57	103	74%	76
Average	111	75%	83

The Bridgeport elementary school provides about one half of the incoming students to the high school. The remainder comes from a total of nine rural schools which graduate from one to twenty students each year. Several of these schools feed students into the three other high schools of the county.

The curriculum of the high school is composed primarily of academic subjects with additional offerings in the field of agriculture, industrial arts, including building trades, home economics, commerce, and driver training education. The school day is divided into seven class periods, three fifty-seven minutes and the rest forty minutes in length. Between the second and third periods there is a twenty minute home room period which will be described later.

CHAPTER II

THE PLACE OF GUIDANCE IN THE CURRICULUM

An effective guidance program centers its attention on the student and attempts to help him become better adapted to his environment. The total guidance program, a cumulation of the various services of the school, has for its purpose the adjustment of the curriculum to the student as well as the adjustment of the student to his school and to the society in which he lives. It attempts to tie loose ends together, to make experiences less frustrating and help the student to better visualize himself as well as the society in which he lives. Guidance services available to the school should be knitted into a well-organized program in order to make them conveniently available to the student. These services might include testing, counseling, placement and follow-up, as well as the maintenance of an organized personnel records system. These will be discussed later.

The term guidance is often misunderstood and abused. Members of the teaching profession are sometimes guilty of the same practice. Guidance as an organized service to the school is a relatively recent development. Proper rapport and understanding between administrators, teachers and the community become necessary before a strong guidance program can be developed. A guidance program, like a curriculum, must

be adapted to the soil in which it is to flourish.

The talents and needs of pupils, the effectiveness and readiness of the teachers, the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and the nature of the community to be served must all be considered in the planning of the program. It is said that guidance must be home grown, that it must evolve as the needs for expanded services are understood, prepared for, and implemented. No guidance program is any better than the personnel administering it. Melchior states, "Whether we have one part-time counselor or a complete staff of competent workers they must be dedicated, sincere, humble, and willing to work beyond all conscience."¹

The guidance program like other curriculum developments must have the sanction of the superintendent and the board of education who develop the policies of the school. It has been said, perhaps with considerable truth, that enthusiastic support for a guidance program comes only when the idea of guidance is incipient from the administrative offices of the school.

¹Oliver W. Melchior, "What is an Effective Guidance Program in the Senior High School?" The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Vol. 40, No. 219, p. 4.

CHAPTER III

SERVICES OF THE GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The suggested services of a guidance program will be discussed in conjunction with the services now existing in the Bridgeport High School.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

1. The Use of Personnel Records:

Lloyd D. Crane states,

Every worth-while guidance program employs accumulative pupil records. These give family background, health factors, attendance, socio-adjustment, experiences in and out of school, hobbies, social activities, elementary school record, positive constructive comments, and suggestions from all of the students' comments, and suggestions from all of the students' teachers at all school levels. A place for results of social guidance on the card is important in this work and also a place for listing occupations pursued after school.²

Information about students is important when counseling with individuals. Good records help a counselor to help sense how life looks and feels to his counselee; thus, they aid in beginning an interview smoothly and productively. A cumulative record eliminates the use of precious interview time in the collection of factual information. Facts must be considered when decisions are in the making; therefore, it is certainly more economical to keep them in a permanent file which grows with the person than to repeatedly ask for them.

²Lloyd D. Crane, "What is an Effective Guidance Program in the Senior High School", The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Vol. 40, No. 219, pp.2-3.

2. The Status of Records in the Bridgeport Township High School:

At the present time personnel records of the students in the high school are at a minimum. A brief information card is kept on each enrolled student. This contains information obtained from the student on registration day as well as the class schedule. A permanent record, maintained on each student, shows the courses taken and the grades obtained.

3. Suggested Improvement in Personnel Records:

The problem of keeping complete records will be seriously handicapped until coordination between the elementary units and the high school will be such that information is transferred with the students. At present, few if any, records are kept in the elementary school. However, until the time that a satisfactory record is developed and adopted a cumulative record and folder should be maintained for each student in the high school. In this folder information such as the student's autobiography, a socio-gram, anecdotes, questionnaires, and test results should be kept. Adequate records, properly maintained for all students, but also made available to all faculty are not only valuable but a necessity in a good guidance program.

INFORMATION SERVICES

1. The Use of Information Services:

An information service can be one of the most important phases of a guidance program if it is properly organized and directed. The services should meet the needs of all students in the school. It might include the displaying of published occupational materials and post-

graduate training bulletins, specially arranged interviews with business and professional men, assembly programs, career days, and visits to industrial plants. All help to guide young people in making decisions relative to careers.

Humphreys and Traxler have suggested the following questions to be used in the analysis of a profession or occupation:

1. What is the nature of the work in the occupations?
2. What special mental abilities are required in the occupation?
3. What are the special educational pre-requisites for entering the occupation?
4. How can this occupation be entered?
5. Are there any restrictions as to those who can enter the occupation?
6. What are the conditions of work?
7. What has been the general trend of employment in the occupation?
8. What is the average income, and what is the income range in the occupation?
9. In general, how may this occupation be rated as a life career?³

The students who seem to be interested in unskilled or semi-skilled labor will probably benefit from information gathered about opportunities for local employment. This phase of guidance, "placement and follow-up services", will be discussed later.

2. The Status of Information Services in the Bridgeport Township High School:

The extent that occupational information has been made available to the high school students of Bridgeport has depended largely upon the individual teacher. Without doubt the amount of information has been

³Anthony Humphreys and Arthur E. Traxler, Guidance Services, (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1954) pp. 288-289.

6. To compare present achievement with past achievement as an indication of rate of progress or growth.
7. To group pupils for instructional purposes, whether it is done physically or in the mind of the teacher.
8. To survey and analyze an individual's difficulties and to indicate "remedial" areas which need more testing for diagnostic purposes.
9. To compare achievement with potential.
10. To provide a basis for counseling with parents and pupils.⁵

The class room teacher would no doubt find the last three points particularly important to his guidance work.

2. Testing in the Bridgeport Township High School:

In the present system two or three tests or test batteries are given with regularity. These are the "California Test of Mental Maturity", "The Illinois Statewide Testing Program", and occasionally the battery of aptitude tests given by the Illinois Employment Service. In view of the way the information gained from tests is used, there is a question if their administration can be justified. The results of the "California Test of Mental Maturity" have been filed and have not been available to the teaching staff. The results of the Illinois Employment Service were of limited value since the school had no control over the service, and many of the teachers knew little about the results. It would seem that the expense and time needed for testing would justify only a proper interpretation and the maximum use of the resulting scores.

3. A Suggested Testing Program for the Bridgeport Township High School:

The number and types of tests needed should be determined by

⁵Mary Louise Flood, "How Can The Results of a Testing Program Be Used Most Effectively?", The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, Vol. 40, No. 219, p. 326.

the information sought by the guidance staff and teachers. The following tests might prove valuable: (1) Either before the ninth grade registration, or at the beginning of the school year, an achievement test as well as an intelligence test should be given to all new students. (2) In the tenth grade an aptitude test should be administered. (3) During the eleventh year the "Illinois Statewide Testing Program" should be given. (4) In the twelfth year another intelligence test should be administered. (5) In addition, the guidance director should have on hand a number of tests to be given at his direction. Among these tests might be an individual type of intelligence test, an interest inventory, aptitude tests of specific abilities and possibly a personality inventory or rating device.

COUNSELING SERVICES

1. The Uses of Counseling Services:

Through counseling a student may be guided into giving serious thought to his future. It is important that the individual have an outlook on life which will enable him to become a well-adjusted citizen of our modern society. Through the various guidance services, and especially through counseling, the young man or woman is guided in making a wise choice of a career. Counseling is an individualized service and proceeds largely through interviews in which the counselor is:

1. Obtaining information.
2. Giving information.
3. Interpreting.
4. Engaged in therapy.⁶

⁶Crane, op. cit., p. 2.

Individual counseling is a skill which requires training in counseling techniques. The counselor must realize his own limitations and utilize special professional help and clinical services when needed. The able counselor, moreover, is a professional person who is skilled not only in individual but also in group techniques. Important counseling problems include:

1. Dealing with students concerning education and vocational files.
2. Counseling the under-achieving student.
3. Counseling for better study methods.
4. Counseling for reading improvement.
5. Counseling for better personal adjustment.

In any phase of counseling the counselor should work with the whole person in all the different aspects of his life. Because counseling lends meaning and purpose to guidance, it is absolutely essential to a guidance program.

2. The Status of Counseling in the Bridgeport Township High School:

The home room period provides the teachers of Bridgeport with an opportunity to act as counselor. However, this twenty minute period is not used for this purpose more than once a week. As the guidance services were originally planned, the teachers were to follow an outline prepared by another teacher who had been designated as guidance director. This outline suggested discussion topics on school orientation, moral, and social values, and vocational planning. This seemed to be a forward step, but unfortunately was not followed by many of the teachers of the home rooms. Consequently, only a limited number of the students were

given any counseling assistance.

There is no doubt but that much of the individual counseling in the high school was given unconsciously by the dedicated teachers showing a personal interest in the students. As for the assigned guidance director, about the only individual counseling performed was when she was acting as attendance director and working with violating students. In this respect, the principal pays high compliments for the job done.

3. Suggested Improvement in the Counseling Services:

In analyzing the existing counseling services it seems that the home room could be used more effectively if the staff members better understood the guidance program. Therefore, one of the first steps would be to initiate an in-service program planned cooperatively by the guidance director, principal and a faculty committee. A home-room program that successfully orients the students as a group would cut down substantially the time used in individual counseling. It would appear advisable to divorce the job of counseling from the job of attendance director and disciplinary officer. Any situation which tends to break down rapport between the counselor and his clients is undesirable in the eyes of authorities in the field of guidance.

Bridgeport High School should have a guidance director working full-time as a coordinator of all guidance services. This individual might also act as the head counselor. Along with the individual counseling, adequate physical facilities should be provided for the counselor. The success of counseling depends upon rapport established and the confidential nature of the individual interview. The role of the counselor must be understood and accepted by staff members, students, and the community to be effective.

PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

1. The Use of Placement and Follow-Up Services:

The word, placement, has a much wider meaning than the term, job placement. It is a service which assists students in carrying out their plans and acting upon their choices. Schools should aid in placing the student when he leaves his school work since no other agency, with the possible exception of the home, knows as much about the student. Herein can the guidance program assume the responsibility for helping the students utilize information and evaluate their choices. The transition following school is a difficult period for many of our young men and women. Since the value of any school is frequently judged by what students do after leaving, it seems exceedingly important that the school operate a placement program. Satisfactorily placed students reflect credit upon the school. The placement program is, therefore, an effective means of building a place of respect for the school in the community.

Follow-up studies of graduates have often been described as a means of justifying the existing placement program. Too often these studies have been neglected. The follow-up is an integral part of the school's guidance services. Without it, counseling cannot be complete and fully effective. A counselor who does not learn what has happened to his counselee is like the physician who does not check to see whether the patient has recovered from his illness. Neither is providing the professional services that he should.

Guidance services must be constantly evaluated in order to learn whether they are both adequate and effective. These evaluations in turn point out changes that should be made. In reality, these evaluations or follow-up studies could be extended to the content of the curriculum of the school. The guidance director by virtue of his training in

statistics, tests and measurements, is usually the best qualified person in the staff to conduct these surveys.

2. The Status of Placement and Follow-Up Services in the Bridgeport Township High School:

Placement services have not existed in Bridgeport Township High School. Also, little in the way of follow-up services have been performed. One follow-up study was conducted in 1956 relative to the grades made by college freshmen who had graduated from the school. The results of this study were sent to the parents of students attending high school. The data of this study appear in Table 2.

3. Suggestions Concerning Placement and Follow-Up Services:

Although placement and follow-up services are often lacking in the small high schools of Illinois, they are considered to be a valuable part of a guidance program. These services might remain as a part of the information services until their need is realized by the community. The successful operation of a placement service depends largely on the cooperation obtained in the community. The director of the program must be able to obtain a listing of the job openings, in-service training programs, trade-school and higher educational opportunities available for the young people of his school. Job openings could even include summer employment opportunities when available. Hatch and Dressel suggest these steps in developing a program of placement and follow-up:

1. Securing a staff to render the service.
2. Setting up adequate housing in as nearly centrally located place as possible.
3. Determining the scope of the initial service.
4. Preparing the necessary forms and records.
5. Defining the service to the students, staff and the potential employers.⁷

⁷Raymond N. Hatch and Paul L. Dressel, Guidance Services in the Secondary School, (Dubuque: William C. Brown Co., 1953) p. 109.

A valuable type of follow-up study is one which secures data from former students of the school. This data might include information on (1) job satisfaction, (2) income, (3) promotion, (4) whether the training received in high school was of value, and (5) recommended training for the students who are presently enrolled.

An occupational survey has proven in many cases to be valuable as a follow-up device. A survey of this type might cover the following: the nature and extent of employment; labor supply and demand; wages and hours; occupational outlook; local, state and regional employment conditions and training opportunities. In addition, such problems as employment problems of minority racial groups in the population; employment problems of older workers, employment problems of the physically handicapped; and legislation affecting labor might be investigated. This type of information presented to both students, teachers and parents might prove to be extremely valuable.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEED OF BETTER GUIDANCE SERVICES

DROPOUTS

At Bridgeport Township High School about 25 per cent of the students entering as freshmen leave school prior to graduation. This figure is lower than the national dropout figure of our country; but it still represents a sizable number of pupils. Usually the students who drop out of school are the ones who would benefit the most from a guidance program.

Among the many reasons given by students dropping out of school the following occur most frequently:

1. Prefer working to attending school.
2. Not interested in school.
3. Cannot learn or keep up with the class.⁸

One of the aims of a guidance program is to alleviate the causes for students dropping out of school. Student adjustment to school is a problem of considerable importance.

COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

During the past eleven years, 906 students have graduated from the Bridgeport Township High School. Of these, 232 students have pursued work in some college or university. This number includes only

⁸Anon. "How Long Should They Stay In School?" Scholastic, December 6, 1956, Vol. 69, p. 8.

the group that completed one year of advanced work and does not include the students who have gone directly to business college, nurses' training or terminal trade schools. Students as freshmen earned 2387 grades as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Distribution of Freshman College Grades of Graduates of Bridgeport Township High School at Eastern Illinois University and Totals for all Attended Universities

Totals for all Institutions			Totals for E. I. U.	
No.	Per Cent	Grade	No.	Per Cent
350	14.66%	A	95	14.53%
764	32.01%	B	207	31.65%
929	38.92%	C	256	39.14%
237	9.93%	D	70	10.70%
<u>107</u>	<u>4.48%</u>	<u>E or F</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>3.98%</u>
2387	100.00%		654	100.00%

Too often individuals who take advanced education have only a vague idea of their objective in life. Thus, a guidance program which assists individuals in establishing realistic goals is of value. The success of students seems more likely if they understand the rationale behind the course requirements set up by institutions of high learning.

Between the years 1945 to 1955 sixteen students from Bridgeport Township High School graduated from Eastern Illinois University. During these years 51 students had enrolled at the institution. From the available records of those taking the ACE Tests (The ACE Tests are the American Council Psychological Examinations - norm based on Teachers College Freshmen) forty-one scores showed a near normal distribution. Of the students graduating from Eastern, only twelve scores were available. Two-thirds of these students showed standardized scores below the 50th percentile. All but one of these students had grades in high school

which placed them in the upper quartile of their respective classes.

The number of students graduating from Eastern appeared to be too small to be of any real value in drawing a valid conclusion about high school experiences. However, it would seem that a good guidance program in the high school might eliminate many problems passed on to the colleges.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The initiation of a guidance program in a school curriculum should be the responsibility of the administration. The guidance staff should include the principal, the guidance director, counselors and a few teachers. In a small high school such as Bridgeport, this may comprise a majority of the educational personnel. The objectives of the guidance program as well as the roles of different staff members must be understood by the whole school. Likewise the program must be accepted by the community. It is important that the program be carefully planned and developed gradually so that a maximum of understanding and cooperation can be gained.

A guidance program consists of integrated guidance services which benefit the individual students as well as the teaching staff, administration and the community. The primary objective should be the skillful guidance of the individual student. This can be accomplished only through a careful interpretation of facts about the person to be guided. Consideration must be given to the environment in which the individual hopes to move, as well as the environment in which he now finds himself.

An organized, functional guidance program in the school system would undoubtedly prove to be one of Bridgeport's greatest assets. The writer has strong hopes that such a development will take place in the Bridgeport Township High School.

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