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## ABSTRACT

This evaluation was conducted to: (1) develop a programmatic assessment of the existing guidance services within the secondary schools, focusing primarily on the perceptions and satisfaction of the recipients of these services; and (2) to project the needs for changes in services, programs, and organizational patterns, as these are dictated by emerging changes in school and community problems, needs of children and youth, and improved capabilities for professional practice. Findings indicate that: (1) there is a desire and backing for a strong program of guidance services built around meeting the educational, vocational, and social needs of students; and (2) parent, teacher, student and community perceptions of counselors as minor administrative functionaries are supported by analyses of counselor activities contained in log records. Vigorous leadership, program flexibility, differentiated staffings, inservice training, staff development, and greater involvement in the curriculum and in special programs within and without the school system are required for such change. (Author/TM)

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ASSESSMENT AND PROJECTION  
OF  
GUIDANCE SERVICES  
OF THE  
DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Study Conducted By

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1970

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An Assessment and Projection  
of Guidance Needs and Services  
in the Des Moines Public Schools  
1969-1970

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Background of the Study

In the fall of 1969, upon action by the Board of Education, an evaluation study of guidance services in the Des Moines Public Schools was initiated. Professor Donald H. Blocher of the University of Minnesota and Professor John L. Ferguson of the University of Missouri were contacted regarding this study. After a series of conferences with Superintendent Davis and other administrative staff, and after meeting with a committee of school counselors headed by Lyle Reeves and Jack Borg, Professor Blocher and Professor Ferguson agreed to submit a proposal for such a study, and in the event of its approval, to act as principal investigators in implementing the study.

In the course of preparing this proposal, the investigators consulted widely with school and community leaders in an effort to obtain a broad and thorough understanding of the nature of the community, its problems, needs and aspirations, as well as the organization and structure of its public school system.

The proposal that evolved from this consultation was based upon a two-fold set of purposes. It was decided to develop an assessment of the existing guidance services within the secondary schools, focusing primarily on the perceptions and satisfaction of the recipients or consumers of these services. Such consumers of course, include parents, teachers, students, and indirectly, community organizations including employers and civic agencies.

Several basic decisions were involved in developing the study in this direction. First, it was decided to build the evaluation along programmatic rather than personal lines. A previous study of the guidance services had centered primarily on the quality of counseling interviews performed by individual counselors. Such a focus was considered too narrow for the present study. It was also decided to study guidance programs within schools as well as across schools since the preliminary consultation had revealed considerable diversity within schools in terms of populations served and other characteristics such as curriculum and organizational patterns that potentially affect guidance services.

The second basic purpose of the proposal dealt with projecting needs for changes in services, programs and organizational patterns, as these are dictated by emerging changes in school and community problems,

needs of children and youth, and improved capabilities for professional practice made possible by recent developments in the guidance field.

The proposal for this study was developed, submitted, reviewed and approved for funding by the Board of Education. Following this approval, a series of meetings was held with the counselors, school principals and central office staffs to explain the purposes of the study, the procedures for data-gathering, and the time-frame within which the study was to be accomplished. Counselors were selected in each school to coordinate data collection activities. An on-site field staff of two part-time workers was selected and trained to assist in data collection. A set of instruments was developed and tested. Data analyses and processing procedures were developed for machine scoring and analysis of data. A calendar was established for on-site visits by the principal investigators to each secondary school. Meetings were also scheduled with members of the Board of Education, key central office staff and elementary principals.

### Principal Sources of Data

#### Student Data

The primary student data obtained in the study were collected in the following ways. A ten per cent random sample of secondary school students was drawn by school. One of the field workers visited each of the secondary schools and administered the Student Questionnaire to the sample in classroom size groups. In addition to the questionnaire data, the field workers also did personal interviews with small sub-samples of students within each school. A total of 1618 student questionnaires were obtained.

### Teacher Data

Teacher questionnaires were submitted to all secondary school teachers. The returned questionnaires were collected by the cooperating counselor in each school. Questionnaires were returned by a total of 826 teachers. While this sample was not random, it represents about ninety-three per cent of the total teaching staff. Additional data were obtained directly by the principal investigators during site visits to each school.

### Parent Data

Random samples of twenty-five parents from each secondary school were drawn. These parents were contacted by the field workers for structured telephone interviews. A total of 447 such interviews were accomplished.

### Counselor Data

All counselors in the system completed the counselor questionnaire. Lengthy sessions with the counselors in each school were held by the principal investigators during site visits. Logs containing samples of work activities for representative weeks were also obtained.

### Administrator Data

Principals, vice principals and advisers in each school were interviewed by the principal investigators during site visits. Interviews were also conducted with other key administrative staff from the Central Office.

### Community Leader Data

Structured personal interviews were accomplished with twenty-five key community leaders who were judged to have had contact with the guidance program. These included employers, labor leaders, youth and welfare agency leaders and business leaders.

### On-Site Visitation Data

On-site visits by the principal investigators to each of the eighteen secondary schools made possible the interviews with principals, advisers, teachers and counselors mentioned above. In addition, these visits allowed the research team to gather firsthand information about school programs, physical facilities, student population, staff relationships and emotional and attitudinal elements that could not be obtained in any other way. These visits also afforded counselors and other staff direct opportunity to make inputs into the study by speaking directly to the research team about their problems and perceptions.

### Other Data

The principal investigators met with the elementary school principals to discuss guidance needs in those schools. They also interviewed school psychologists and social workers, police liaison officers and other staff of special programs. The research team also interviewed six of the seven members of the Board of Education.

Overall, the total pattern of cooperation in the study has been outstanding. The research team has received a great deal of help from school staff and is particularly indebted to Lyle Reeves for his untiring assistance and cooperation in coordinating many aspects of the study.

### Principal Findings

One of the major foci of the study was to obtain data about the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing guidance sources as viewed by the publics to which those services were directed.

### Community Leaders' Responses

Structured personal interviews were held with twenty-five key business, labor and community leaders to assess their perceptions of the guidance programs. A surprisingly high degree of agreement about the guidance program was found within this very diverse group. The agreement reflected within this group is described under the following headings and is contained in representative quotations.

#### (1) Guidance Services are Important

The importance of guidance services in the educational system was a universal theme in these interviews. An officer of a major insurance company represented this theme in the following terms: "Person-to-person relationships are a great need today. Students must have an opportunity to develop a personal relationship with a reasonable, understanding adult. Give the student who is floundering and not college bound an opportunity to visit with the counselor and find his place."

A juvenile court official put it this way: "Counselors are needed for supportive help when inadequate parents can't meet the emotional needs of the child. The counselors in the schools are the closest available help for the student and could be of great service if only they can find the time."



The personnel director of a large manufacturing company mentioned a need that was reflected in several of the interviews when he said, "Counselors are needed in elementary grades as well as in junior and senior high school levels. Many problems could be solved long before high school if there could be some trained person in the lower grades to help with them when they first occur."

(2) Present Services are Limited in Effectiveness

A second theme on which there was considerable agreement was that the present program was limited in effectiveness because of several factors. Most frequently mentioned reasons were that counselors were overburdened with administrative duties, counselors were too few in number, counselors were insufficiently trained and counselors did not have appropriate personal qualifications. The director of a public welfare agency put it this way: "Counselors cannot function as counselors. Administrative duties make the job almost impossible. The most able counselor is bogged down with paper work. Youth needs an opportunity to sit down with an understanding, consistent adult who can and will give them his time and ear. The counselor must be able to function on a personal basis with the student. To do this, he must be allowed time and freedom."

The director of a private family service agency made these remarks: "Focus on vocational aims are no longer sufficient for a guidance system. Students need personal and social guidance which the schools are not now equipped to give. Changes in the feedback from the community are not getting into the schools fast enough and this limits the effectiveness of the counselor."

The personnel director of a large department store reacted in a similar vein: "Personal counseling cannot be separated from vocational and educational counseling. It should be the responsibility of the counselor to see that each student receives adequate time to discuss his problems. This naturally calls for more counselors."

The personnel director of a large manufacturing concern put his views in this way: "Students need better direction as to what they want to do. They lack knowledge and interest in business and industrial careers. This calls for more career counseling involving field trips and day-long experiences in the plants and offices. Schools must provide more time for career investigation. This suggests an understaffed system."

The director of a child guidance facility made these remarks: "Some counselors are good. Some are very poor. Personal counseling is neglected. Few counselors are trained in this area. Counseling as it now exists is the lowest priority of youth. Students need easy access to adult types to show them reasonable human beings skilled to guide them. If more is desired than the present system, then training and supervision is necessary. All departments of Pupil Services, including nurses, social workers, psychologists and advisers should be involved in change. They should work together as a special services team with good open communication existing at all times."

A social worker in a human rights agency summed up things in this way: "Counselors need an opportunity to do pre-counseling--before problem situations arise. They must have fewer students to be responsible for. Counselors lack understanding of the life style of minority

students. More guidance activities should be directed to improving the curriculum. Forums for community residents should be held to explain the guidance program and what it can and cannot do."

The one area in which there was considerable disagreement among those interviewed concerned the adequacy of present counseling staff. Considering the diversity of the group interviewed, the wide range of contacts with the guidance program and the number of counselors in the system, this is hardly surprising. The employment manager of a public utility put it this way: "Individual counselors are sincere, but the ratio of students to counselors is too high." A personnel manager in a bank was more critical: "Services are generally adequate, but are being held back by poor personnel. Services are not as valuable as they should be because of poorly qualified and trained counselors." On the other hand, the personnel director for a local newspaper remarked that, "Services are excellent," while another owner-manager of a business believed that, "Student needs are being met -- the system is advancing in the proper direction." The personnel director of a publishing company said: "Guidance personnel are well trained and professional."

#### Summary of Community Leader Responses

The interview data obtained from community leaders reflects a surprisingly high degree of agreement that guidance services are important and should be expanded, particularly in the area of personal and social counseling. Eleven of the twenty-five people volunteered the belief that present services are understaffed. Considerable opinion was expressed that the present system does not allow adequate opportunity for personal relationships between counselors and students to occur. Preoccupation

with administrative detail, poor definition of role, inadequate counselor training and understaffing were cited as limitations. Reactions of interviews to the performance of present counseling staff ran the full range from extremely negative to very positive.

### Parents' Responses

A random sample by school of 450 parents was drawn. Telephone interviews were completed with 447 of these people. One refused to cooperate and two could not be located. The principal statistical analysis applied to these data was the calculation of per cents of parents having had direct contact with guidance staff and the percentage of cases in which that contact was considered helpful or not helpful. Of the 447 parents interviewed, sixty-nine per cent reported a direct contact with the school counselor. Considering the fact that this sample included an approximate one-sixth of parents of seventh grade students who may have had limited opportunity for such a contact prior to the interview, this represents a high percentage. It is probably accounted for in part by the intensive parent involvement program operated in the junior high schools. The most impressive aspect of the parent data concerns the rating of helpfulness of those contacts. Ninety-two per cent of the parents who reported counselor contacts said that these were helpful. It is apparent from these data that existing guidance services are reaching more than two-thirds of the parents and that these services are overwhelmingly viewed as valuable by the parents. Nearly one-half of the parents interviewed expressed a desire for more frequent contacts with counselors.

While there was considerable variation in specific experiences cited by parents from one school to another, the general tone was remarkably consistent. Parents want more and better guidance services for themselves and their children. They generally value the services now offered, but believe they should be improved in terms of quantity and availability. The majority express the desire for more and better trained, and more readily available counseling staff. Representative comments include:

"We need more counselors."

"Counselors should make themselves more available to students."

"The counselor is the only one in the school who can help with problems."

"We need more counselor-parent conferences."

"Counselors need more time for individual students rather than having so much paperwork."

"We need better trained counselors to deal with deep-set emotional problems."

"Counselors are too overloaded with students."

"Counselors should know students better."

"Counselors should take more personal interest in people."

"Kids feel their problems now -- they should not have to wait for an appointment."

"There should be better screening of candidates for counseling positions."

"Begin counseling at early age in elementary school."

"Some counselors are real good and some are real bad."

"You have to nag to get counselors to pay attention to you."

Perhaps the prevailing parent opinion was summed up best in the following quote: "Counselors should take the time to work with individual students and always be available."

#### Summary of Parent Responses

The parent data can be summarized rather easily. Two-thirds of the parents have had contacts with the guidance services. Of these contacts, more than ninety per cent were described as helpful. Overwhelmingly, parents want more personalized and more readily available services for their children. They believe that present services tend to be understaffed, overloaded with administrative detail and relatively unavailable to individual students.

Parents tend to be positive about the personal contacts that they and their children have had with counselors, and are most negative about those factors that prevent frequent, close personal contacts with counselors. Parents tend to believe that counselors should be personally acquainted with students and available both to parents and students on a very easy and informal basis.

#### Teacher Responses

The teacher questionnaire was completed by 826 teachers. This was not a random sample, but constituted about ninety-three per cent of the entire teaching staff. The teacher questionnaire was designed to obtain data about teacher involvement in guidance activities and teacher satisfaction with the guidance services. Table 1 reports the percentage of teachers who reported that counselors were somewhat helpful to very

helpful with a series of guidance tasks or problems with which teachers are involved or are able to observe. Data are reported separately for the junior high schools and senior high schools. Inspection of Table 1 reveals that junior high teachers generally see counselors as more helpful with the listed activities than do senior high school teachers. Most interesting, however, is the fact that the only activity with which two-thirds of the teachers in either junior or senior high schools report the counselors as helpful is the scheduling function. This finding is clearly supported by observations made on site visits. In these interviews, teachers invariably described counselors as primarily class schedulers and program planners. On the whole, these data indicate that only about one-half of teachers in the junior high schools, and considerably fewer than one-half of the senior high school teachers see the counselors as helpful to them in guidance-related problems or activities.

TABLE 1  
 Percentage of Teachers Reporting  
 Counselors as Helpful to Them  
 by Activity within Junior and  
 Senior High Schools

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>Jr. High</u>	<u>Sr. High</u>
Interpreting test scores	54	55
Giving information on gifted students	52	43
Giving information on handicapped students	50	48
Giving information on emotionally disturbed students	65	48
Giving information on home problems of students	63	52
Giving information on underachievers	57	49
Helping understand problems of normal development	43	30
Helping cope with behavior problems	56	41
Providing useful information in student folders	45	37
Providing referral source for troubled students	53	41
Planning student programs	82	88
Helping students learn social skills	57	31
Helping parents understand children	59	42

Another aspect of teacher satisfaction with guidance services is contained in Table 2. This table reports the percentages of teachers who responded "Yes" in regard to a series of questions about counselor effectiveness. Inspection of Table 2 shows some differences between junior and senior high schools with slightly higher percentages of junior high teachers responding favorably except in items nine and five, both of which concern curriculum development. Both junior and senior high responses are low in this area with junior high slightly lower than senior high. Items ten and eleven concerning placement are understandably slightly higher for senior high schools.



The major finding here is the generally low level of teacher satisfaction with counselor activities. Except in the areas of educational-vocational planning and home-school relationships, teachers' positive responses ranged from about fifty percent to under twenty percent. Of particular note here are the low responses concerning counselor activities in curriculum development and in-service training.

TABLE 2  
 Percentages of Teachers Responding  
 Affirmatively to Questions of  
 Counselor Effectiveness (by  
 Junior and Senior High Schools)

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>Percent "Yes" Response</u>	
	<u>Jr. High</u>	<u>Sr. High</u>
1. Do counselors recognize and take appropriate action concerning unusual talents, interests and urgent problems of students?	52	47
2. Do counselors assist students to set up realizable educational-vocational plans?	54	58
3. Do counselors assist teachers to contribute to the guidance program?	51	39
4. Do counselors promote better understanding among home, school and community?	70	62
5. Do counselors provide information concerning needed changes in curriculum?	26	38
6. Do counselors prepare case studies and conduct case conferences?	44	24
7. Do counselors assist in in-service guidance training for all staff?	26	19

8. Do counselors make use of community resources in helping counselors?	38	32
9. Do counselors assist teachers and administrators to readjust curriculum for better pupil adjustment?	29	37
10. Do counselors do placement for students?	27	42
11. Do counselors assist school leaves with placement and further training?	9	15

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Another important purpose of the Teacher Questionnaire concerns the degree of teacher involvement in guidance activities. Since the evaluation conducted in this study is broadly programmatic, the degree of teacher involvement is very significant. Table 3 shows percentages of teachers who report frequent involvement in selected guidance-related activities. Inspection of Table 3 reveals consistently low percentages of teachers who report frequent involvement in these activities. No item response reaches fifty percent in either junior or senior high school. Of particular note here is the very low percentage of frequent use of guidance information. While larger percentages of teachers reported occasional involvement in these activities, it appears that frequent teacher-conducted guidance activities are limited in the system. These results should be related to data reported in Table 2 indicating low degrees of counselor activities in areas of curriculum development and in-service training.

TABLE 3  
 Percentage of Teachers Reporting  
 Frequent Involvement in Guidance  
 Activities by Junior and  
 Senior High Schools

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>Jr. High</u>	<u>Sr. High</u>
1. Talking with students about careers in subject area.	25	41
2. Giving students college/vocational information.	13	29
3. Encouraging the use of occupational materials.	22	35
4. Using test results to plan teaching.	24	25
5. Encouraging student exploration of social relationships.	21	22
6. Using individual information for individualized assignments.	16	15
7. Providing personal information on students.	13	9
8. Talking with parents about their child.	30	16
9. Identifying staff members with special talents.	34	30
10. Referring students to counselor or other specialist.	40	33
11. Participating in case conferences.	22	13
12. Identifying students with special problems to staff members.	36	25
13. Talking with students about educational/vocational goals.	26	45
14. Working with students who have personal problems.	28	29
15. Helping students toward more personal or "inner goals."	49	45

### Summary of Teacher Data

Generally, the teacher data reveal that teacher perceptions of counselor helpfulness and effectiveness are sharply split with positive perceptions being generally a minority view. Frequent teacher involvement in guidance activities is also very limited. Teachers generally perceive counselors as most helpful and effective in course scheduling and planning, vocational planning and parent-school relationships. They tend to see the guidance program as minimally helpful in curriculum development, individualization of instruction and in-service training. In addition to the machine analyzed data reported above, open-ended items on the questionnaire and personal interview responses were obtained. These results supported very closely the findings reported above. Teachers very largely see counselors as schedulers, heavily pre-occupied with administrative detail. They perceive students as needing personalized, readily available counseling services. The teachers themselves express needs for help in curriculum development, coping with behavior problems and disturbed children and low achieving children. By and large, they do not see the existing guidance services as offering much help with these problems.

One major finding derived from open-ended questions and interview responses was the virtually alarmingly low state of morale among teachers. The research team received the strong impression during site visits and from teacher questionnaires that many teachers feel overwhelmed by changes occurring in school and community. Reactions to these changes seem to take the form of both apathy and discouragement, and at

times openly hostile and punitive reactions toward students, parents, school administration and others.

One constantly recurring theme in this vein was the feeling that little constructive communication existed between building faculties and central administration. The prevailing feeling of many teachers was that no one knew or cared about them or their problems, and that constructive change was impossible within the existing system. Such perceptions and beliefs may not be realistic, but quickly tend to become self-fulfilling prophecies by inducing alienation and apathy among the staff.

#### Student Data

The student questionnaire was administered to a random sample by school that totaled 1616 students. The purpose of this questionnaire was to elicit information about the students' use of and satisfaction with the existing guidance services and their perceptions of needs for additional or alternative services.

Table 4 reports percentages of students indicating a tendency to use existing services for obtaining help with selected types of problems. Inspection of this table reveals that approximately one-half of the students at both levels see the counselor as a primary source of help with vocational problems. Two-thirds of the junior high school and slightly more than one-half of the senior high school students report the likelihood of using the counselor for educational problems. Less than one-fifth of the junior high and less than one-tenth of the senior high students indicate the counselor as the major source of help with personal problems. This finding is interesting, in view of the fact that

over ninety percent of all students report having seen a counselor. The evidence strongly suggests that present counseling services are simply not seen as a major source of help with personal problems and are not perceived as a prime source of help with educational and vocational concerns by substantial minorities of students.

TABLE 4  
 Percentages of Students Reporting  
 Tendency to Use Existing Counseling  
 Services for Selected Types of Problems  
 (By Junior and Senior High School)

<u>TYPE OF PROBLEM</u>	<u>Percent Willing to Use Counselor</u>	
	<u>Jr. High</u>	<u>Sr. High</u>
Vocational Exploration and Decision	48	48
Educational Planning or Problems	68	57
Personal Concerns or Problems	18	9

Another similar indicator is reported in Table 5. Students were asked to rate the perceived helpfulness of counselors on a seven-point scale. The picture given in Table 5 is more favorable than Table 4. Approximately one-half of the students at both levels rated counselor helpfulness in the top three categories indicating perception of a substantial degree of helpfulness. About one-fourth of the students, however, who marked the lower three categories apparently have not perceived the counseling service as particularly helpful.

TABLE 5

Student Ratings of Counselor  
Helpfulness in Percents of  
Students Marking a Seven-Point Scale  
(By Junior and Senior High Schools)

Students*	No Help At All						Extremely Helpful
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Junior High	7	8	12	18	19	16	16
Senior High	3	11	13	23	23	13	12

\* Four percent of junior high and two percent of senior high did not respond to this item. Totals do not equal 100 percent.

When students were asked to respond to kinds of help which they saw as available, they tended to perceive the availability of educational, and to a slightly lesser degree, vocational counseling. Table 6 reports percentages of students at both levels who reported their perceptions of availability of various kinds of help. Inspection of Table 6 shows that in only two categories, understanding test scores and vocational-educational planning, do substantial majorities of students perceive available help.

TABLE 6  
 Student Responses in Percent  
 to Kinds of Help Experienced  
 or Perceived Available  
 (By Junior and Senior High)

<u>KIND OF HELP</u>	<u>Jr. High</u>			<u>Sr. High</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>?</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>?</u>
Freedom to discuss personal problems	33	38	28	14	62	23
Help in understanding test scores	69	14	15	64	23	12
Group discussion about attitudes	30	35	33	29	41	29
Help with Educational/Vocational Plans	63	28	8	72	22	4
Help discussing real feelings about things	41	23	25	28	48	24
Help with study habits	36	49	14	16	72	10
Help with relating abilities and interests to future plans	41	40	17	47	43	9
Help in determining ability for college	34	46	17	48	41	11

Further information related to the tendency to perceive the counselors more as administrative functionaries, or at best, information-givers was obtained in the student questionnaires with a series of 29 items designed to tap the students' perception of their counselor. These items dealt with student perception of counselor warmth, empathy, trust and acceptance that have been found to be closely related to successful outcomes in personal counseling. On these items, substantial minorities of students either perceived their counselor as lacking in such qualities or were unable to respond because of lack of opportunity to know the counselor well enough. For example, on the item, "It is hard for me to



get to know what he is really like as a person," fifty-six percent of the high school students and thirty-three percent of the junior high school students responded "true" or "probably true." In terms of this response, it is not surprising that twenty-seven percent of the high school and sixteen percent of the junior high school students responded uncertainly or negatively to the item, "I feel I can trust him to level with me." Twenty-two percent of the junior high and twenty-nine percent of the senior high students responded "true" or "probably true" to the item, "I often feel that he has more important things to do when I am talking to him." In a similar vein, twenty-eight percent of the high school and sixteen percent of the junior high school students responded affirmatively to the item, "He hurries me through my business with him."

TABLE 7  
 Percent of Students Desiring  
 More Guidance Help than  
 Presently Available by Problem Area

<u>ADDITIONAL HELP DESIRED</u>	<u>Percent Requesting Additional Help</u>	
	<u>Jr. High</u>	<u>Sr. High</u>
College Information	26	13
Vocational Information	31	26
Test Information	20	29
Placement Information	32	51
School Orientation	23	42
Schedule Changes	10	8
Program Planning	20	11
Understanding Abilities, Interests	27	47
Development of Study Skills	41	65
Help with College Choices	33	32
Finding Part-Time Jobs	44	58
Finding Jobs Upon Graduation	43	54
Finding Jobs for Dropouts	47	62
Help with Personal-Social Problems	34	55

Helping with Trouble in School	18	35
Help with Career Choice	20	21
Visiting with Parents	27	36
Help Develop Special Talents	36	44
Help Students with Handicaps	33	34
Help with Dating Problems	50	53
Help with Problems of Drug Abuse	34	52

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A major purpose of the student questionnaire was to obtain information about the students' own perception of the need for improved or expanded services. Table 7 shows the percentages of students requesting more help than they now perceive as available by problem areas. Inspection of this table indicates that only relatively small percentages of students see the need for more help in schedule changes and program planning. These are obviously the areas that are now seen as primary functions of counselors. Similarly, information regarding colleges, vocations and tests are seen as areas of need by less than one-third of the students. Additional help with study skills, part-time jobs, jobs for dropouts, help with personal-social problems, dating problems and drug abuse problems are all areas in which very substantial percentages of students are appealing for additional help.

#### Summary of Student Data

The student data presented above seem relatively easy to summarize. Students do not now see the existing counseling services as important sources of help with personal-social problems. Substantial minorities of students seem reluctant to use the services for educational or vocational problems. Students tend to see counselors functioning primarily as schedule changers or program planners and to a lesser degree as dispensers of educational and vocational information. A majority of

students see the present services as moderately to very helpful. Substantial groups of students do not perceive counselors as warm, empathic, accepting persons. Some indications suggest that serious limitations of time, and opportunity to build the kinds of relationships needed to support personal kinds of counseling exist. Students are clearly asking for additional and improved help in precisely those areas that involve personal trust, empathy and acceptance. Student requests for improved and expanded services are very closely in harmony with expectations expressed by community leaders and parents. There is wide variability in student perceptions of counseling services across schools. The questionnaire data and interview data both attest to the fact that student perceptions of counseling services and counselors vary widely.

### Counselor Data

Data were obtained on the counselors themselves from a wide range of sources. Primary sources were the Counselor Questionnaire completed by all counselors, counselor log sheets detailing work activities at scattered intervals throughout the year (to avoid seasonal biases) and from direct on-site interviews by the research team.

The overall picture perceived by the research team from their visits was that the guidance departments were in what might generally be called a "reactive posture." Little evidence could be found of active, thoughtful program planning, or even of clearly defined goals and priorities within which active, systematic program planning could be accomplished. Concepts of counselor roles tended to be vague and diffuse. Frequent comments were made to the research team that "somebody ought to decide what the counselor's role is!" Little evidence was found of active leadership. The department chairmen tended to be temporary, elected for one-year terms within the Department and generally perceiving their roles to be merely that of handling necessary reports and administrative details. Little evidence was found of consistent systematic leadership from the Central Administration. Visits from the Guidance Supervisor or Director of Pupil Services were apparently very infrequent and even indirect contacts were reported as perfunctory and almost always strictly administrative. Some implication was made that the Guidance Supervisor was actually not welcome in certain schools because of communication and for relationship problems with principals. The latter situation seems almost an incredible state of affairs.

Division of labor within the departments seemed rudimentary,

if not non-existent, except in a few cases which special assignments were made for specific individuals to "feed the computer," that is to coordinate the ACCESS programming function. In the majority of situations, the counselor loads were arbitrarily established by alphabetical division of student rosters. Counselors tended to be engaged in a very wide range of activities and to be relatively unable to justify clearly the priorities by which these activities were related. Relatively infrequent and limited communication was perceived between guidance departments and principals. As one principal put it, "I probably spend less time with the guidance people than any other department." Counselors frequently complained of their inability to obtain time and attention from principals. The rate of innovation and adoption of new practices and ideas was perceived as generally low. One of the most frequent explanations of existing practices was simply, "We have always done it that way."

General morale and job satisfaction of counselors seemed low in terms of the absence of positive satisfactions, but the research team found remarkably few specific complaints or suggestions for improvement. The only clear-cut exception to this was in the area of availability of clinical assistance where at least two-thirds of the counselors indicated on the Counselor Questionnaire that their effectiveness was impaired by this factor. To a slightly lesser extent, there was also agreement that the lack of available referral resources was an inhibiting factor.

Data from the Counselor Questionnaire tend to support the impressions of extreme role diffusion and ambiguity obtained during the site visits. Counselors were asked to check those functions that they

performed from a list of three-hundred possible activities, and to indicate whether they believed these were appropriate within their professional role. Very wide diversions of opinion on role appropriateness were found. Counselors also reported a very large number of activities in which they were engaged. More than one-hundred activities were reported performed by at least one-half of the counselors. On the other hand, agreement by ninety per cent of the counselors on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of activities was limited to sixty-four, or about one-fifth of the items. These data support the general picture that counselors' role perceptions are diffuse and diverse.

Analysis of counselor log data was similarly very revealing. These detailed logs were maintained by counselors for one week at scattered time intervals to avoid bias. The range of reported activities varied from arranging for a symposium on drug abuse to a reported weekly chore of weighing-in the sixty-two members of the girls' drill team. A number of representative excerpts from counselor logs are given below:

Monday, March 30

8:00 a.m. L \_\_\_ J \_\_\_ concerning summer school schedule.

8:05 a.m. Book work scheduling conferences for Tuesday and Wednesday.

8:15 a.m. T \_\_\_ H \_\_\_ wanted information a summer job.

8:22 a.m. B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ has decided to take Driver Training in Summer School rather than next fall. He hopes.

8:30 a.m. D \_\_\_ S \_\_\_ brought in the number of his learner's permit for Driver's Training.

8:32 a.m. Back to the books!

8:35 a.m. M \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ brought note to drop algebra.

8:45 a.m. K \_\_\_ H \_\_\_ and his usual morning greetings.

- 8:50 a.m. F\_\_\_ H\_\_\_ wanted an appointment to see me. Talked right then and there. Also made an appointment for Tuesday--friend problems--too much time during vacation.
- 9:00 a.m. Made an appointment for car repair.
- 9:10 thru 3:25 sorting IBM cards for reporting grades. All three counselors worked all day.
- 3:25 p.m. R\_\_\_ L\_\_\_ R\_\_\_ was waiting for me. He needs his morale boosted often. A new stepfather in the home.
- 3:40 p.m. Throwing appointment slips in the homeroom boxes for tomorrow's schedule.

The log sample included above was typical of those reported in several ways. It reflects the large number of very brief student contacts reported by the counselor and the fact that contacts are largely routine and administrative, interspersed with the almost pathetic bids of troubled youngsters for time and attention. (Note that the boy with the new stepfather got fifteen minutes.) The girl who wanted immediate help got ten minutes and an appointment for the next day. Six hours and fifteen minutes, less lunch, were devoted to sorting IBM cards (three counselors). A rough estimate of the hourly cost of counselors at the top of the schedule would be ten dollars per hour for direct salaries. Estimating a modest forty per cent of direct salaries for indirect costs, counselor time could be conservatively costed at fourteen dollars per hour. The five and one-half hour session of card sorting reported here by three counselors probably cost the taxpayers of Des Moines about \$240.00. This seems a shocking mismanagement of both taxpayers money and precious professional resources -- while the boy with the new stepfather got fifteen minutes.

The following is an excerpt from the log of a junior high

school counselor. This log entry is not typical in that it does not reflect a representative amount of clerical and administrative work, but it does give an adequate picture of the range of student and parent contacts reported.

#### COUNSELOR LOG FOR THE COUNSELOR EVALUATION PROJECT

MONDAY, MARCH 16, 1970

- 8:00 - 8:20 Organization for the day, mail sorting, reading, filing, writing out passes, etc.
- 8:20 - 8:30 Visited with several students about incidental problems and the like in the cafeteria and in the counseling office.
- 8:30 - 9:00 Parent, student and counselor conference. This involved a review of student's past record and planning for ninth and tenth grades.
- 9:00 - 9:30 Enrolled three new students.
- 9:30 - 10:00 Parent, student counselor, conference. This was an eighth grade parent conference where we review the past record of the student and plan for ninth and tenth grades.
- 10:00 - 10:15 Scheduled two new students. Attempted to make them feel at home, arranged tour of the building, secured lockers and the like (here we utilize student helpers for this function).
- 10:15 - 10:30 Telephone conversation with school psychologist regarding hard-of-hearing student. Planning and placement for student in the seventh grade special education program.
- 10:30 - 11:00 Eighth grade parent, student, counselor conference. We reviewed the past record of the student and planned for ninth and tenth grades.
- 11:00 - 11:30 Parent, student, counselor conference. Again we reviewed the past record of the student and planned for ninth and tenth grades.
- 11:30 - 12:00 Parent, student, counselor conference. This was an eighth grade conference and we reviewed the past record of the student and planned for high school.



- 12:00 - 12:15 Conference with student regarding school progress and evaluation of the daily report form student has been carrying for the past month.
- 12:15 - 12:30 Discussion with a variety of students concerning problems and/or general conversation.
- 12:30 - 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 - 1:15 Conference with student regarding school progress and evaluation of the daily report form.
- 1:15 - 1:30 Conference with student regarding school progress and evaluation of the daily report form.
- 1:30 - 1:45 Conference with student regarding school progress and evaluation of the daily report form.
- 1:45 - 2:00 Conference with student regarding school progress and evaluation of the daily report form.
- 2:00 - 2:30 Parent, student, counselor conference. This was an eighth grade conference and reviewed past school record and planned for ninth and tenth grades.
- 2:30 - 3:00 Review and evaluation of data collection procedures for elementary school. This is primarily written work and also attempting to make some plans for the future.
- 3:00 - 3:15 Visited with students who stopped in on their way out of the building - general conversation, problems, etc.
- 3:15 - 3:45 Visited with fellow counselor, and made plans for visiting elementary schools on Tuesday and Wednesday.
- 3:45 - 4:00 Talked with teacher regarding possible schedule change for student and all the problems surrounding this schedule change.

The following is a typical log report from a senior high school counselor. It does not contain time allocations, but is very much representative of the log reports of senior high school counselors. For this reason, the entire week's entry is given.

MONDAY 23 February

Conferred with counselor regarding code sheet.  
Checked code sheet for errors.

Checked computer request cards, distributed misplaced cards.  
Conference with principal regarding next year's 7 o'clock classes.  
Called ACCESS to arrange procedures for scheduling 7 o'clock classes.  
Replaced lost schedule for student.  
Meeting with English teachers regarding next year's offerings.  
Filled out ACCESS request cards for 1970-71.  
Wrote student pass to nurse.  
Checked with music teacher about choir for 1970-71.  
Student Center supervision 12:30 to 1:00.  
Lutheran Hospital called regarding student who is hospitalized there.  
Called ACCESS for more request cards.  
Supplied records requested by registrar.  
Student problem regarding Salesmanship (a lengthy conference).  
Teacher sent student for schedule change.  
Conference with business department head regarding offerings for 1970-71.  
Took code sheet for 1970-71 to library for book order.  
Talked to student regarding dropping class.  
Talked to teacher regarding implementation of new office education co-op course.  
Filled out college recommendation for student.  
Consulted with girls' adviser regarding student scheduling problem.

#### TUESDAY 24 February

Talked to counselors about letter from language teachers.  
Student visit regarding dropping a course.  
Checked course requests and computer cards from junior high.  
Talked with counselors' secretary regarding mailing some letters.  
Code course requests for 1970-71.  
Call from Weeks Junior High regarding code sheet.  
Call from parent regarding boy's being picked on in PE.  
Counselors' meeting one hour.  
Code course requests for 1970-71.  
Conference with coordinator regarding office education for 1970-71.  
Conference with librarian regarding book requests for 1970-71.  
Discussed plans with counselors' secretary for distributing personality rating cards.  
Answer counselors' questions regarding completing course request cards.  
Conference with counselor chairman regarding 1970-71 office staff.  
Call from Kurtz Junior High counselor about office staff recommendation.  
Student visit regarding college application.  
Student visit regarding college application.  
Prepared rating cards for teachers.  
Visit from student regarding Central College report.

#### WEDNESDAY 25 February

Teacher visit about next year English courses on code sheet.  
Student visit regarding college application.  
Student visit regarding summer school.

Registrar visit regarding discipline problems in Student Center. She orders counselors to "shape up."  
Checked English request cards.  
Trip to ACCESS to pick up materials.  
Student Center supervision 12:30 - 1:00.  
Discussed distribution of grade labels for graduating seniors with counselors' secretary.  
Made and distributed passes for students requesting appointments.  
Student visit regarding 1970-71 requests.  
Call to ACCESS to order address labels.  
Received call from Administrative Management Society regarding luncheon on 11 March.  
Posted grades of January graduates.  
Call from girls' adviser regarding new student.  
Student visit regarding VISTA.  
Visit by new student.  
Call from dropout regarding re-entry.

#### THURSDAY 26 February

Checked with homeroom teacher on attendance of a student.  
Visited classroom teacher regarding attendance of same student.  
Checked with girls' adviser regarding girl's record.  
Visit from student regarding absence slip.  
Visit from student to check credits.  
Visit from student regarding class change.  
Filed warning slips and other papers.  
Call from insurance company.  
Student visit regarding college application.  
Teacher regarding office education for 1970-71.  
Teacher visit regarding student schedule.  
Entered new grade on record from completed contract.  
Conference with girls' adviser regarding student who is moving to live with aunt.  
More filing of valentines (Form 13's).  
Trip to ACCESS to pick up address labels.  
Delivered address labels to office.  
Distributed missent warning slips.  
Teacher visit regarding student schedule.  
Student visit regarding schedule.  
Student visit regarding summer school.  
Visit with boys' adviser regarding parent complaint.  
Attended meeting at Merrill Junior High.

#### FRIDAY 27 February

Reviewed directive from English and math teachers.  
Checked 1970-71 seniors' programs for those planning speech.  
Student visit regarding schedule.  
Student visit to outline 1970-71 schedule.

Discuss coding problem with chairman of commercial department.  
Call from junior high counselor regarding algebra for grade 10.  
Sent pass to student for conference.  
Talked with principal regarding confusion of new courses.  
Picked up my check (I've earned it this week).  
Call from hospital teacher regarding student who is hospitalized.  
Checked with classroom teacher regarding hospitalized student.  
Visit from Vocational Rehabilitation counselor.  
Call from Commission for the Blind regarding student.  
Student visit regarding senior schedule.  
Student visit regarding credits.  
Student visit regarding senior schedule.  
Student visit regarding senior subjects. Completed course card.  
Check with girls' adviser regarding problem student.  
Student Center supervision 12:30 - 1:00.  
Student conference about 1970-71 schedule.  
Call to hospital teacher with assignments.  
Checked with substitute teacher to get teacher's keys.  
Students from forensics visit to interview for a panel.

This log entry is extremely revealing in terms of the perception of counselors and counseling services obtained from the other data. It would be difficult to label accurately the role represented here as that of a "counselor." During the entire week, of the eighty or so entries listed, fourteen are clearly student contacts; one of which could clearly be defined as counseling. These kinds of reports strongly confirm the image of the counselor that emerged from the consumer data.

In addition to the data described above, information was obtained regarding the training and backgrounds of Des Moines counselors. All but seven of the present counseling staff received their M. A. degree from Drake University in essentially part-time programs. This reflects an extremely high degree of parochialism and inbreeding. It may well be related to the low levels of innovation and experimentation observed. Only in two schools, both junior high schools, were well-developed attempts at innovating new roles observed.

One mystery that was not unraveled by this study was how Des Moines counselors are selected. The wide variability in student perceptions and in the research team's perception of counselor characteristics led to doubts about standardization of selection procedures or criteria. Running throughout the data from community leaders, parents, teachers and students was the perception of wide differences in counselor effectiveness and personality characteristics. The research team was not able to pinpoint any standard set of procedures or criteria.

#### Summary of Counselor Data

The counselor data may be summarized in these terms: Little evidence of careful systematic program planning and development is evident either within guidance departments in individual schools or system wide. In both situations, leadership vacuums seem to prevail. Concepts of counselor role seem varied, vague and diffuse. Analysis of counselor logs indicates large amounts of expensive professional time expended in non-counseling and often non-professional activities. Counselors, themselves, feel that lack of adequate clerical support seriously inhibits their effectiveness. Analysis of counselor activities tends heavily to confirm the image of the counselor widely held by parents, teachers and students, as that of a minor administrative functionary, pre-occupied with routine tasks, and relatively unavailable for counseling and consulting activities that demand a fully professional level of expertise. Counselors tend to come from one counselor preparation institution.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The major findings discussed above support a number of basic conclusions about the guidance services in the Des Moines Public Schools. Among these are:

1. Parents and community leaders in Des Moines desire a strong program of guidance and services built around meeting the educational, vocational, personalized social needs of students.

2. Parents value highly the existing guidance services and desire to see them improved in quality and quantity.

3. Parents want more personalized services made available to their children.

4. Parents and community leaders are supportive of increased guidance services for the elementary schools.

5. Parents tend to see present services as understaffed and bogged down with minor administrative details that do not allow counselors to provide close personal relationships to children.

6. Teachers generally have a low level of involvement in guidance activities.

7. Teachers tend to see counselors as primarily engaged in and effective with routine activities such as class scheduling and program planning.

8. Teachers see counselors as minimally helpful in assisting with curriculum development, or in direct consultation in regard to classroom problems.

9. Students do not see existing guidance services as primary sources of help with personal problems, and substantial minorities of students do not perceive these services as helpful with vocational-educational problems.

10. Students tend to see counselors as most concerned with course scheduling and programming.

11. Large percentages of students express the need for improved and expanded guidance services particularly in areas of study skills, job placement, personal-social problems, dating and drug problems.

12. Little systematic program development activity is underway in the guidance area in Des Moines.

13. Improved leadership and program development resources are needed.

14. The present role perceptions and role performances of counselors are varied, vague and diffuse.

15. Parent, teacher, student and community perceptions of counselors as minor administrative functionaries pre-occupied with scheduling and other often clerical detail tend to be supported by analyses of counselor activities as contained in log records.

### Recommendations

The recommendations that follow are based primarily on the need for the program of guidance services to become action-oriented rather than reaction-oriented. Vigorous leadership, program flexibility, differentiated staffing, in-service training, staff development and greater involvement in the curriculum and in special programs within

and without the school system is required for such change. The desired change must come from within and be designed to encompass the coordinated efforts of all school personnel. Meaningful teams must be created and the capability to effect individual and group behavioral change. The teams must also be capable of developing flexibility, sensing of student and program needs and build in provisions for self-evaluation.

Specific Recommendations:

1. That a differentiated staffing system be established within the guidance services. This system would include five types of guidance workers. These would include:

a. Guidance Technician - a paraprofessional aid who would specialize in handling administrative detail necessary for the functioning of the guidance program, would be involved in administering and recording group tests and results, would have responsibility for maintenance of cumulative records, organizing and dispensing environmental information, performing scheduling and reporting functions related to computer-controlled systems.

b. Guidance Programmer - A professionally certified guidance worker who will supervise guidance technicians and clerical workers, will advise students in regard to problems of scheduling, schedule changes and specific course selections, consult with teachers and administrators on questions of scheduling of course offerings, providing of adequate information regarding curriculum offerings and monitor grading and transcript procedures.



c. Guidance Counselor - A professionally certified guidance worker prepared at least the M.A. level who performs group and individual counseling with students and their parents in regard to personal-social problems, educational skills and related problems, vocational and educational planning and placement, developmental problems including dating and courtship, development of self-awareness and identity and relating self to adult society.

d. Guidance Program Coordinator - A professionally certified guidance worker prepared at the Specialist (M.A. plus one year) level, charged with program planning, development and coordination at building wide or pyramid levels. The coordinator may serve as guidance department chairman, consult with school administrators on policy determination, consult with academic departments on curriculum development, consult with individual and teams of teachers on problems of shaping instructional and classroom management procedures to student needs, develop case conference and other staff communication procedures, coordinate the use of school and community referral sources and conduct systematic and continuous program evaluation to insure accountability for use of resources.

e. Counseling Psychologist - A Ph.D. level counseling psychologist capable of consulting with and advising the Superintendent of Schools and his immediate staff on pupil personnel problems and policies, coordinating pupil personnel programs on a district-wide basis, designing and implementing in-service training programs for teachers and pupil personnel workers, coordinating school psychologists, school social workers and other special services personnel, consulting and advising

with building principals and guidance coordinators on program planning, development and evaluation.

2. That a Personnel Selection and Assignment Board for Pupil Services be established to select, assign and reassign personnel within the differentiated staffing system outlined in Recommendation 1 above. This Board should review applications, interview personnel and make recommendations regarding employment, assignment promotion and tenure to the Superintendent.

3. That an in-service training program be instituted as soon as possible under the direction of a Ph.D. level counseling psychologist. This program should be directed to the improvement of individual and group counseling skills with students, particularly in working with problems of personal and social adjustment, attitudes toward the adult society and its institutions, dating and marriage, drug abuse, self-awareness and identity and educational skills. It should include improvement of skills on the area of parent and family consultation, teacher consultation and curriculum development.

4. That pilot programs in the area of elementary counseling be established immediately and evaluated over a three-year period to determine directions for program development in this area.

Excerpts from the January 19, 1971 School Board Meeting

Dr. Blocher and Dr. Ferguson presented their report and recommendations to the Board. Dr. Blocher stated the interview data obtained from community leaders reflected a high degree of agreement that guidance services are important and should be expanded, particularly in the area of personal and social counseling. They also believe that the present system is understaffed. Parents interviewed also want more personalized and more readily available services for their children. Dr. Blocher commented that teachers think of counselors as primarily class schedulers and program planners and many do not see the counselors as helpful to them in guidance-related problems or activities.

Dr. Ferguson discussed specific recommendations. He stated (1) A differentiated staffing system be established within the guidance services which should include five types of guidance workers (guidance technician, guidance programmer, guidance counselor, guidance program coordinator and counseling psychologist). (2) A personnel selection and assignment board for pupil services be established to select, assign and reassign personnel within the differentiated staffing system. (3) An in-service training program be instituted as soon as possible under the direction of a Ph.D level counseling psychologist. (4) That pilot programs in the area of elementary counseling be established immediately and evaluated over a three-year period to determine directions for program development in this area.

Dr. McCaw stated he was very impressed with the thoroughness of the report and believed there should be a team consisting of teachers and counselors to work on student problems. He asked about the personnel selection board and Dr. Ferguson stated there should be a re-evaluating of counselors and their capabilities because there are those who have higher qualifications than others. He commented you need counselors who communicate to youngsters and that you might even have to go outside the school areas to get them.

Dr. Caudill said the study has been helpful to the Board and hoped that the suggestions will provide a way to solve their problems.

Mr. Niffenegger remarked that everyone attempts to have the school do the job that should be done in the home and to carry out the suggestions it would take one counselor to about every 20 students.

Mrs. Goldman said that many of the needs of more youngsters could be helped through group counseling. She remarked that a lot depends on how we interpret teaching and counseling.

Mrs. Marilyn Staples suggested that children have the opportunity for small group discussions where they could meet and talk over their problems. She said part of the school day could be freed-up for this as it was just as important in the school process.

Mrs. Spevak asked about the number of clerical positions in the guidance department in the secondary schools and how much it would cost to bring the requirements up to their recommendation. She said there must be clerical help for the counselors if they are to be effective.

Dr. Ferguson commented on the pilot project to find out how effective a differentiated program might be.

Mrs. Goldman remarked there was a number of schools running a project similar to this and more moving to this kind of guidance services. Dr. Blocher said it utilized teachers, administrators and counselors in a team program and this kind of concept is being used in Minneapolis. He said it is a more flexible way of packaging resources that are available for the needs of children.

Mr. Schlamp remarked that somewhere along the line there has been a separation of teaching and counseling. He said teachers know when something is wrong with a student but now the student goes to the counselor who does not have the same contact and it is difficult for him to find out what the trouble is. He said that this study should be taken up in one of the workshops before any definite course of action is taken.

Mrs. Spevak moved that the report be received with special commendation to Dr. Blocher and Dr. Ferguson for the excellence of the study and requested that the staff take a look at it and make a recommendation within six months or sooner. Dr. McCaw seconded the motion.

Mr. Schlamp requested roll call.

Aye: McCaw Niffenegger Spevak Caudill Goldman Schlamp ----- 6  
Nay: None