

**Wichita Falls Independent School District
Counseling and Mental Health Advisory Committee
Meeting
Thursday, May 19, 2016, at 4:00 p.m.
Wichita Falls High School**

CALL TO ORDER

Michelle Wood, WFISD's CTE specialist, called the Counseling and Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Marisa Herold, WFISD
Kris Gossom, Interfaith Ministries
Kerri Herrera, Child Protective Services
Richard M. Hoban, Assistant CEO, North Texas State Hospital
Amanda Gamble, WFISD
Jessica Bennett, WFISD
Michaëlle Kitchen, Midwestern State University
Christina Feldman, Vernon College
Michelle Wood, WFISD
Ann Work Goodrich, WFISD

BUSINESS

The group elected a chair (Kris Gossom) and a secretary (Kerri Herrera) to direct the meeting. A WFISD employee may not hold these positions, according to rules put forth by the Perkins Grant, which sponsored the meeting.

OVERVIEW

The way career education works now, students are not asked to pick a career in 8th grade but to begin thinking about it. They use a computer program called Career Cruising to identify their

key interests and skills and match those with possible careers. In 8th grade, an entire class is devoted to career exploration.

By helping a student find interests and goals early, we believe they will stay in school, said Mrs. Wood.

CURRICULUM

By 9th grade, students will have chosen one of five endorsements (career tracks) and a program within the endorsement. They'll be enrolled in the 9th grade Principles class for that program.

The Counseling and Mental Health class is an 11th grade class under the Principles of Public Service Track. Students will take the Principles of Public Service class in 9th grade, the Child Development class in 10th grade, and move into Counseling & Mental Health in 11th grade, with a Practicum in Human Services in 12th grade.

The Principles class lets students explore a broad range of careers that they may or may not have heard of. They will continue to narrow their perspective in the 10th grade Child Development class, then narrow further in 11th grade as they move into Counseling and Mental Health.

The Child Development class in WFISD used to be a baby class, teaching women how to be a mom. WFISD is turning the class into a CDA curriculum. Students will study developmental milestones, what it looks like when children “fail to thrive” and other skills necessary in childcare workers.

The senior year provides work experience in a practicum. They will get high school credit and experience.

“Every (career) looks great on paper,” said Mrs. Wood. But what you think a job is and what it actually requires may not always be the same, in both good and bad ways, she said. It’s important that students discover what a job they like really requires, and that’s what the practicum can help teach them.

The CTE Center will serve students once they become juniors and seniors and move into the more hands-on phase of their career training.

WFISD started course sequencing this year. Students are not used to having to take prerequisites, so this is new.

There are eight different principles classes offered at all three high schools, with current freshmen and sophomores enrolled in their favorite principles class now.

When the CTE Center opens, it will be full. The 2016-2017 school year will be a dry run, since the CTE Center is not yet built. CTE courses that will ultimately be at the CTE Center will start out at the various high schools where they are centered. For example, the counseling program will be at Wichita Falls High School.

There will be 450 students traveling to all four campuses for the 2016-17 school year.

Seniors will take one hour of instruction, then be allowed to leave for a practicum. They will be out by 1 p.m. and their practicum will count for two periods.

Richard Hoban asked who developed the curriculum for Counseling and Mental Health. He said kids graduate from high

school or work at MSU and come work “for us” at the North Texas State Hospital.

Mr. Hoban said a good addition to the curriculum would be a “Mental Health First Aid” class. It includes a proprietary history of mental health and a history of diagnoses. “Our clinicians are excellent presenters,” he said. “We could provide that.”

He said Midwestern State University has “an awesome nursing program.”

Dr. Kitchen said MSU’s counseling program is going for its national accreditation through CACREP: the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. This Council accredits master’s and doctoral degree programs in counseling and its specialties.

“I can send you a list of what counselors need so you can see what our students need to know,” said Dr. Kitchen.

Mrs. Wood said the counseling field is broad and students only know the parts of it that they’ve been exposed to.

Kris Gossom said she refers half of her clients to mental health services.

Most of the curriculum is an exploration of interests.

Mr. Hoban said Counseling and Mental Health also includes the field of rehab. That includes rope courses and other such dynamics. There’s also the job of recreational therapist, which many students are unaware of. Mrs. Wood said if she had life to live over again, she would choose the job of a recreational therapist.

ENROLLMENT

A large group of students have enrolled in the Public Service track. Next year, 125 students at each campus will be enrolled in each of the five areas within Public Service: Instructional Practices in Ed & Training, Counseling and Mental Health, Culinary Arts, Forensic Science & Law Enforcement 1, and Cosmetology 1.

The Child Development program has three sections of 50 to 75 students per campus.

This will be the first year for the Counseling and Mental Health program. It will operate out of Wichita Falls High School. There will be two sections of Mental Health classes with 20 to 22 students in each. "So there are 44 interested in Mental Health...more than we thought," said Mrs. Wood.

Students were surveyed and asked if they would be bothered if their specialty was located at a school they didn't like. Not a one indicated that the location of the specialty classes would influence their decision to take it or not. In other words, the rivalry is not a problem among the students and is not driving their decisions.

CERTIFICATIONS

Students may earn the CDA certificate for Child Development. This is the Child Development Associate certification, a national certification for working in the daycare industry. It takes 500 hours of official work experience to apply to test.

There is not a national mental health certification.

But the CDA will get a student's foot in the door. "Many employers will take something over nothing," said Mrs. Wood.

Once a student is 16 years old, he can work in day care. He can be an instructional aide before he is a senior, then graduate and take a job with a school district as an aide.

It's important to create a variety of "exit points" for students to go into the workforce...at graduation, after a two-year community college education, or after a four-year college experience.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- * Skills USA for competitions
- * National Technical Honor Society (requires a 3.0 grade point average in all courses, not just career courses)
- * FCCLA for home economics students (FCCLA is the Texas Association of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America)
- * DECA, an international association for marketing students, is available for students in business and marketing

SUPPLIES

There are not a lot of supplies needed in this track. The teacher will be purchasing a set of ChromeBooks for students. There is now a 1:2 ratio of technology to students.

"Can you recommend anything that we need for counseling?" asked Mrs. Wood.

"We can rotate a lot of staff (as presenters) through this," said Mr. Hoban.

The Advisory committee will meet twice a year. In September, Ms. Gamble will have her first semester curriculum and will be able to identify holes that community members can help her plug.

There will be another meeting the following May. We will be able to discuss what worked and what didn't. "Our goal is to utilize our resources," said Mrs. Wood.

It's always wonderful to bring in community members to speak to students. "Our own kids act so much better for others. Just like them, our students need to hear about careers from someone other than the one teacher in their classroom."

At WFHS, 120 students are taking the Forensic Science and Law Enforcement 1 class (as juniors in the Public Service Track). They will learn "it's not like at (television show) CSI," said Mrs. Wood.

It is very difficult to find a forensic psychiatrist to come and work in Wichita Falls, said Mr. Hoban.

It is also hard to attract child and adolescent psychiatrists to our community, said Mr. Hoban.

That is also true in auto technology and a variety of other skilled areas, said Mrs. Wood. "Our solution is to grow our own," she said. "We have all these wonderful kids. They may have to go off to be trained. But if they have family here, they are more apt to move back."

"Growing our own has worked for us," said Mr. Hoban. "We have a fairly active recruitment program for nurses."

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

There is no age discrimination in this field and no gender bias.

It is pretty even in male and females in the counseling and mental health field.

“Is there any strategy that will help address diversity?” asked one.

It would be beneficial to route bilingual students into this field, where they are sorely needed.

“We struggle to have interpreters,” said Mr. Hoban. Recently he needed a Nigerian interpreter.

At Interfaith Ministries, the big need is for bilingual in Spanish, said Mrs. Gossom.

Kerri Herrera said CPS likes to hire bilingual. “One client only speaks Arabic,” she said. When dealing with this client, they must bring in someone from Dallas to interpret.

Mrs. Wood clarified that many students can’t read and write both English and Spanish, but it is enough that they can speak both languages.

WFISD has no bilingual high school or junior high counselors or CTE teachers – that’s how rare they are.

A bilingual teacher will automatically receive a \$7,000 signing bonus when hired on in the Metroplex school districts, said Dr. Kitchen.

Being bilingual “is such an asset,” she said.

Mrs. Wood stressed that bilingual students should pursue a career that uses their bilingual talent, and they should be told they are sought after. They should be told, “We want to get you in this area and not let you fall by the wayside.”

SUPPLIES

The CTE Center is located on Hatton Road and will be 123,000 square feet. It will be home to 25 career pathways. One side of the building will be a two-story wing; the other side will be a 1-story industrial wing. The district is expecting that the building will be used by 1,000 students a day.

All students benefit from career exploration. The objective is that every student would earn some sort of certification to take with them as they enter the workforce.

Vernon College has even changed some of its degree plans to match the tracks offered at the CTE Center, said Mrs. Wood. That means earning credits in high school will give students 6 to 10 hours to articulate for free to Vernon College.

“We want to educate them about all three options so THEY’RE making the decision” about how far they go in each field, said Mrs. Wood.

Mrs. Wood said she is in the process of hiring the teachers for the CTE Center. She is hiring two engineers. She has an Industrial Trades position that will do an overview of the automotive, electrical and construction fields. Other needs: business teacher, info tech teacher, and others.

The meeting ended at 4:45 p.m.

