Sabino High School: National Career Development Award Winner

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Overview

In August 1994, the Comprehensive Competency-Based Guidance (CCBG) of Sabino High School, Tucson AZ, was recognized by the National Association of State Career Development/Guidance Supervisors and the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational Education (1994), as an exemplary comprehensive career-guidance program. Sabino High is one of ten high schools in the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) which serves approximately 60,000 students K-12 and is the second largest school district in Arizona.

The Sabino Career Center was started in 1978 with a three-year career-guidance grant that provided a part-time career specialist to work with students and teachers. The next three years, school counselors spent an hour a day working with students in the Career Center. When TUSD reduced the number of counselors in 1984, parent volunteers were trained to run the Career Center and for eleven years they have remained a highly dedicated volunteer force.

Sabino counselors have developed and implemented a CCBG Program using Career Domain competencies as well as competencies in the Educational and the Personal/Social Domains (NOICC, 1989; TUSD, 1993). At Sabino, one school counselor is responsible for the Career Domain, for the Career Center, and for parent coordination.

Parent Volunteers Assignments

Each year, parent volunteers receive new information about colleges and careers. Each senior is seen for twenty minutes in the fall and is provided college and career information. In the spring they see every junior and review the COPS inventory. Parents help students access both the OIS (Occupational Information System) and CHOICES computer programs. Upon request, volunteers also provide assistance to freshmen, sophomores, and their parents. A Career Center volunteer coordinator provides monthly training to parents and holds monthly parent meetings. Volunteers usually commit to work a half day, once a week.

Classroom Integration in Career Fields

The counselors established wonderful working relationships with English teachers at all grade levels. Together they introduced students to the Educational and Career Planning Planner. Sophomores spent two days in the computer labs taking interest inventories with the CHOICES program and exploring career and college information. All juniors took the COPS test -- some took the ASVAB test. All seniors in English class prepared resumes and gave copies to the counselors. Classroom material in a senior Free Enterprise class also provided teachers opportunities to integrate the use of the CHOICES program. Sabino foreign language teachers provided students opportunities to examine careers that use languages. When the advanced placement teacher needed a career unit taught in Spanish, a parent volunteer, fluent in the language, presented an excellent unit.

Additional Vocational Cooperation

The Vocational Technology Department at the district level and Sabino teachers have been working together to provide career education to students in the classrooms and in the computer labs with CHOICES. Counselors have worked with vocational teachers to provide career information, equity lessons, technical preparation, and school-to-work information. The vocational departments at both the district level and at the school level have provided funds for counselors to attend the annual Arizona School Counselors Academy.

Sabino career education competencies follow NOICC competencies, Office of Vocational and Adult Education guidelines, and the Carl Perkins Act regarding career guidance and counseling programs. The IVEP (Individual Vocational Education Program) coordinator works out of the Career Center office and meets with individual vocational students needing career information and has also provided support for the Career Center operation. One of the previous IVEP coordinators started as a parent volunteer in the Career Center, and when she moved into the IVEP coordinator job, the two responsibilities integrated to benefit more students.

Other Career Program Highlights

- With the implementation of a CCBG program for ALL students, ALL students have a career planner, kept in the Career Center, which is updated each year.
- ALL students receive career information at least twice a year in classroom guidance sessions.
- Counselors work with eighth grade students during registration to discuss four-year planning related to career education and high school graduation.
- Middle and high school counselors meet to discuss transition of students each year.
- Students have access to a computer and receive printouts on careers and colleges.
- Students have access to a video library and VCR in the career center to individually investigate colleges and careers.

The 4th R District Initiative

Dr. George Garcia, TUSD superintendent, developed the 4th R: Readiness for Work (TUSD, 1993). Over three years, a profile of the 21st Century Graduate was developed with input from more than 2000 community and school personnel. With strong community consensus on educational priorities, partnerships are being formed in Tucson and all children will graduate prepared for the world of work. At this time, all of the schools in the district have included the “4th R” as one of the school goals. School counselors integrate career goals in classrooms and work with teachers to help students achieve the personal qualities of the 21st Century Graduate.
Comprehensive Methodologies and Techniques

In looking at the qualities that make a career education program successful, the award recognized the following methodologies and techniques:

• Technology is used for instruction with all students by using the CHOICES program.
• Counselors work with teachers to integrate curriculum in English, vocational education, social studies, and foreign language.
• Counselors attend workshops and receive current information to include in their program.
• Parent volunteers have monthly training meetings to receive current information.
• Counselors revise curriculums yearly and make changes to improve their program.
• Schools support Career Centers by providing computers, books, and student folders.
• Counselors evaluate classroom visits and revise plans.
• Counselors work together to deliver the career competencies to all students.
• Counselors provide monthly articles in the school/parent newsletter.
• TUSD provides funding for the CHOICES program and for staff development.

Organizing Parent Volunteer Groups

Many parents want to volunteer but are never given the opportunity or training. School counselors have a wonderful asset if they train and work with parent volunteers. Some suggestions include the following:

• Finding volunteers: (1) Advertise in the school newsletter and in the beginning of the year newsletter that goes to all students; (2) Talk to friends (parents) who have students attending your school; (3) When counselors are registering new students, talk to the parents about volunteering; (4) Ask counselors from feeder schools if they have any active parents who may want to volunteer; (5) Use personal connections with other groups like scouting, church, and other community agencies.

• Keeping the volunteers: (1) Provide initial training that gives parents a strong model to follow, what to do, how to document, how to send out call slips, how to work with office personnel and student aides; (2) Provide monthly training and refreshments. Send out reminders of the meeting and put the topics to be covered on the notice.
• The counselor in charge of the Career Center should be sure to talk to the volunteers each day and provide answers to any questions.
• Tell the parents “Thank You,” either by notes or by small gifts.
• Be sure the office staff knows the volunteers and have one secretary be responsible for helping the volunteers with routine matters.

Conclusion

The award-winning CCBG program at Sabino has a strong Career Center staffed by parent volunteers who work with school counselors to deliver career information to all students. Through a planned CCBG program, parent volunteers meet individually with all juniors and seniors yearly. The award recognized the parent contribution as well as the integration of the teachers and counselors to deliver career competencies. The district superintendent has community support for the 4th R program that has been adopted as a school goal in all the TUSD schools. Through strong collaboration with the Sabino staff, parents and district, students receive career education and learn personal qualities to make them successful in the 21st century.

References


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