

**Van Buren School District
Comprehensive School Counseling Program
2024-2025**

I. Foreword

The Van Buren School District comprehensive school counseling program:

- Is implemented by Arkansas certified school counselors.
- Utilizes state and nationally recognized counselor frameworks.
- Is reviewed annually and updated as needed by the school counselor in collaboration with the building administrator and other stakeholders.
- Is systemically aligned from kindergarten through grade twelve.

II. Foundation

School Counselors

School	Counselor	Phone	Email Address
Van Buren High School	Cara McGhee (A-G) Jordan Duvall (H-O) Taryn Lincoln (P-Z)	479-471-3156	cara.mcgee@vbsd.us jordan.duvall@vbsd.us taryn.lincoln@vbsd.us
Van Buren Freshman Academy	Kortney Ricketts	479-471-3160	kortney.ricketts@vbsd.us
Butterfield Trail Middle School	Kim McCormick (A-M) Rachel Morrison (N-Z)	479-474-6838	kim.mccormick@vbsd.us rachel.morrison@vbsd.us
Northridge Middle School	Austin McKown (A-K) Stephanie Richesin (L-Z)	479-471-3126	austin.mckown@vbsd.us stephanie.richesin@vbsd.us
Central Elementary	Shelby Norris	479-474-7059	shelby.norris@vbsd.us
King Elementary	Cheryl Peters	479-474-2661	cheryl.peters@vbsd.us
Oliver Springs Elementary	Sandie Millard	479-471-3120	smillard@vbsd.us
Parkview Elementary	Amber Hurst	479-474-8730	amber.hurst@vbsd.us
Rena Elementary	Eryn Wallis	479-471-3190	eryn.wallis@vbsd.us
Tate Elementary	Corie Williams	479-471-3130	corie.williams@vbsd.us
River Valley Virtual Academy	Dana Goodman	479-471-3165	dana.goodman@vbsd.us

Beliefs

- All students have access to high quality school counseling services.
- All students have a right to a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Every student is valuable and treated with dignity and respect.
- Student achievement is improved through the comprehensive school counseling program.
- Learning is a life-long process involving the development of academic, career, and social/emotional skills based on the needs of the whole child.
- Student success requires a partnership between school, family, students and community.
- The American School Counselor Association ethical standards guide the work of the school counseling program and school counselors.

Vision Statement

The Van Buren School District counselors ensure every student will acquire the academic, career and social/emotional skills needed to reach their fullest educational potential. Our goal is for students to successfully manage their lives as healthy, responsible, competent and productive citizens who respect themselves and others.

Mission Statement

Van Buren School Counselors provide equitable access to comprehensive counseling services for all students. The Van Buren Counseling program serves the whole child by equipping all students with a healthy, safe, engaging, supportive and challenging environment. This environment will foster the skills needed to become successful, well rounded citizens prepared to reach their full potential as lifelong learners.

Program Goals

The Van Buren School District will guide students in academic pursuits, career planning, and social and emotional learning using the SMART format. Each school will focus on specific goals based on student needs through a multilevel data review which include data analysis, use of time reviews, program results, and communication and contact with administrators, parents, students, and stakeholders.

2025 Van Buren School District Program Goal

Our district has been working on improving a decline in attendance. State and national attention has spotlighted alarming truancy issues. It is our goal to work with families and students to maintain, or improve, current attendance rates at (insert percentage here) for the 2024-25 school year.

Strategies

- Administration will use eSchool data to track unexcused absences.
- Counselors will bridge the gap between school and families to determine needs and provide resources.
- Counselors will work with students and families to set individual goals.
- Counselors and administrators will communicate with local agencies to provide outside resources when necessary.
- School teams will offer attendance challenges on a regular basis to reward students for being present.
- Schools will have an attendance incentive program.
- District wide competition between schools for best attendance.
- Community stakeholders will support schools and encourage attendance.

Action Steps

- Using eSchool reports, administrators will identify students with attendance issues and refer them to counselors.
 - Attendance Issues: more than 5 unexcused absences.
- Administrators or counselors contact families in attendance crisis at 5, 8, and 10 days of unexcused absences.
- Administrators will contact juvenile authorities if necessary based on district compliance to the attendance policy.
- Administrators will pull attendance percentages to determine district attendance winners.

School Counselor Actions

- Addressing student reports and gathering information to determine student needs and next steps.
- Individual and small group counseling.
- Parent contact to help determine needs.
- Secondary counselors provide career counseling and goal setting.
- Counselors stay connected with community resources to help provide students with additional outside resources.

- Classroom counseling sessions.
- Counselors and other school teams will provide encouraging pep talks to keep students at school.
- Counselors will utilize Attendance Works resources to promote and encourage attendance.

Others' Actions Supporting the Goal

- School Resource Officers go on home visits.
- School based counselors provide mental health services.
- Our district offers a virtual learning environment through the River Valley Virtual Academy.
- Our district offers an alternative learning environment.
 - Secondary students have the opportunity to participate in the HUB program. HUB provides a flexible schedule for students.
- Community stakeholders to provide rewards and incentives for students, teachers, and schools.
- Stakeholders encourage and support attendance efforts.

2024 Van Buren School District Program Goal

In recent years, our district has seen a rise in attendance issues. It is our goal to work with families and students to increase school attendance by **0.5%** from the 2024 school year.

Strategies

- Administration will use eSchool data to track unexcused absences.
- Counselors will bridge the gap between school and families to determine needs and provide resources.
- Counselors will work with students and families to set individual goals.
- Counselors and administrators will communicate with local agencies to provide outside resources when necessary.

Action Steps

- Using eSchool reports, administrators will identify students with attendance issues and refer them to counselors.
 - Attendance Issues: more than 5 unexcused absences.
- Administrators or counselors contact families in attendance crisis at 5, 8, and 10 days of unexcused absences.
- Administrators will contact juvenile authorities if necessary based on district compliance to the attendance policy.

School Counselor Actions

- Addressing student reports and gathering information to determine student needs and next steps.
- Individual and small group counseling.
- Parent contact to help determine needs.
- Secondary counselors provide career counseling and goal setting.
- Counselors stay connected with community resources to help provide students with additional outside resources.
- Classroom counseling sessions.

Others' Actions Supporting the Goal

- School Resource Officers go on home visits.
- School based counselors
- Our district offers a virtual learning environment through the River Valley Virtual Academy.

- Our district offers an alternative learning environment through ArchFord Co-op.
 - Secondary students have the opportunity to participate in the HUB program. HUB provides a flexible schedule for students.

Reflection of 2024 Goal

- **Strengths**
 - Each building has a full-time School Resource Officer
 - Educational resources that highlight bullying resources
 - Positive referrals for kindness
 - Schools met during a designated intervention time each day to address academic deficits related to attendance. This time also provided enrichment opportunities to encourage students to be present.
 - Schools offered attendance challenges to encourage attendance.
 - School attendance officers and administrators tracked individual student attendance and increased parent/guardian communication via phone calls, emails, letters, and home visits.
- **Barriers to Success**
 - Lack of timely referral options to support attendance.
 - Community agencies, such as Juvenile Services, have a backlog of referrals and limited options for follow through.
 - Current district attendance policy allows for 16+ days of absences.
- **Outcomes**
 - Review attendance data in eSchool

School Year	Attendance Rate	Growth Rate
2018	93.36%	n/a
2019	95.1%	+1.74
2020	94.65%	-0.45
2021	94.31%	-0.34
2022	93.4%	-0.91
2023	92.54%	-0.86
2024	92.74	-0.62

III. Management

Use of Time

Counselors' use of time should support the expectation that they spend 90 percent of their time providing direct services to students, staff, and families, and the remainder is spent on program management. The following percentages of time serve as a guide for school counselors and administrators when determining the time their program needs to spend in each of the components. The time percentages are designed to be programmatic, not counselor specific. Counselors are encouraged to allot times based on program priorities and needs.

	Planned Use of Time		Recommended
Direct Services to Students	Delivering school counseling core curriculum	Provides developmental curriculum content in a systematic way to all students	90% or more
	Individual student planning	Assists students in the development of educational, career, and personal plans	
	Responsive services	Addresses the immediate concerns of students	
Indirect Services for Students	Referrals, consultation and collaboration	Interacts with others to provide support for student achievement	
Program Planning and School Support	Foundation, management and accountability and school support		10% or less

Annual Conference

An administrative annual conference will be held. The conference clarifies the school counselor's roles and responsibilities.

Advisory Council

The counseling program includes provisions for an advisory council. The council advises on school counseling program goals, reviews program results, makes recommendations, and advocates for the school counseling program.

Calendars (Annual and Weekly)

Annual calendars are developed, implemented, and shared with stakeholders. Weekly calendars are developed and implemented for school counselors and stakeholders as needed.

ASCA School Counselor Professional Competencies and Ethical Standards

- ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies and Ethical Standards
<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/SCCompetencies.pdf>
- The counselor abides by Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators
<http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/divisions/educator%20effectiveness/plsb-professional-ethics-discipline/code-of-ethics-for-arkansas-educators>

IV. Delivery

The delivery system addresses how the school counseling program will be implemented. This section describes the activities, interactions, and areas in which school counselors work to deliver the program through direct and indirect services.

Direct Services

Classroom Lessons	<p>At the elementary level, school counselors deliver classroom lessons to individual classrooms on a monthly schedule. These lessons are no more than 40 minutes in length and counselors deliver no more than three per day or 10 per week. These lessons will include social and emotional learning topics like those provided in the G.U.I.D.E for Life. Career planning and exploration activities will also be covered.</p> <p>At the middle school level, school counselors work with advisory teachers to ensure the delivery of weekly classroom lessons on social and emotional learning like those provided in the G.U.I.D.E for life, involvement in school and activities, grades and learning progress, and career planning.</p> <p>At the secondary level, school counselors work with CAPS Advisors to deliver lessons in course planning and career guidance, grades and learning progress, preparation for college admissions, and social and emotional learning topics like those provided in the G.U.I.D.E. for Life.</p>
Career Exploration	Schools offer age-appropriate career exploration, investigation and

	<p>planning at different levels.</p> <p>Elementary- Career exploration guidance lessons (K-5), District wide Career Day (5), interest inventory and job research (4-5).</p> <p>Middle - Career Development classes are offered at 7th grade and 8th grade for students to take interest inventories, research jobs, and learn more about their options. Community members are invited in partnership with our Chamber of Commerce with AR Scholars for 8th grade students to plan post-graduation.</p> <p>High School- Students are invited to Career Fairs and Career Days Students are asked to do Mock Job interviews with community leaders. Students access the platform of Naviance to document their learning journey and research post-graduation opportunities.</p>
<p>Individual and Group Counseling</p>	<p>District counselors meet with individual students as needed based on referrals from teachers, administrators, parents, and other students. Counselors follow up with students and/or refer them to the appropriate resources to meet their specific needs.</p> <p>District counselors organize small groups based on identified student needs. Examples of topics addressed include behavioral interventions, attendance concerns, grief counseling, college and career planning, and interpretation of test scores.</p>
<p>Responsive Services</p>	<p>District counselors address immediate or short term needs as they occur. This includes crisis counseling and intervention as well as referrals to outside resources as needed.</p>
<p>Suicide Prevention</p>	<p>In the Van Buren School District, suicide prevention includes the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training teachers and staff to recognize the warning signs for students having suicidal ideations ● Training students to recognize the warning signs for suicidal ideations and encouraging them to speak to a trusted adult if they have concerns about another student ● Posting suicide hotline information throughout the school buildings and on the website ● Taking the appropriate steps when a student is identified as possibly suicidal. School counselors conference with students and determine their level of risk based on a screener. School counselors act according to the best interest of the student.

	<p>Actions may include contacting parents/guardians, encouraging students and families to seek counseling services and/or offering a referral for school-based mental health services, or calls to crisis centers or mental health facilities for professional assessments.</p>
<p>Bullying Prevention</p>	<p>In the Van Buren School District, bullying prevention includes the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training teachers and staff to recognize and respond to bullying. ● Training students to recognize bullying and speak out to an adult for assistance if they are being bullied themselves or on behalf of another student. ● Providing access to the STOPIt online reporting tool. STOPIt can be accessed through the district website or through the downloadable app. Students can use this anonymous tool if they or a peer is facing a personal crisis or experiencing bullying or abuse. Administrators and counselors receive the information that is reported and address each report accordingly.
<p>Dropout Prevention</p>	<p>In the Van Buren School District, students who are at-risk of dropping out of school must have a conference with a counselor and administrator. At that conference, students are asked a series of questions, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why are you thinking of dropping out of school? ● What are some of the barriers that might keep you from staying in school? ● What school programs or classes have you enjoyed the most? ● What school programs or classes have you enjoyed the least? ● Are there adults in the school who might help you continue to attend school? ● What are your plans if you leave school? ● Is there anything that we as the school can do to support you staying in school? <p>Depending upon the situation, students are then walked through the options they have if they will stay in school. This includes the River Valley Virtual Academy, the ability to participate in virtual learning, or a modified school day. The district seeks to work with</p>

	students and their situations to get them to graduation.
Graduate Follow Up	<p>We use Naviance to follow up and keep an open dialogue with our high school graduates. https://www.naviance.com/</p> <p>Our committee has an Adult Education program in which they offer assistance to high school dropouts. https://crawfordcountyadulthoodeducationcenter.wordpress.com/</p> <p>The Arch Ford AE program offers the JAG program for high school AE students. https://www.vbsd.us/schools/izard-center-for-learning</p> <p>We utilize the Ready for Life website to highlight open positions in the workforce and community resources. https://www.readyforlife.com/</p>

Indirect Services

Consultation	District counselors meet with other stakeholders on behalf of students. This can include parents or guardians, school staff, and/or other community agencies. By consulting with these other sources, counselors help make decisions on how to best serve students academically, behaviorally, and emotionally.
Referrals	District counselors refer to outside resources to help ensure student success. These resources include school-based mental health services or mental health facilities, and governmental agencies that address child maltreatment.
Decision Making Teams	<p>District counselors serve as contributing members of decision-making teams that help determine appropriate actions for individual students and groups of students, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Section 504 ● Response to Intervention ● Advanced Placement and Gifted and Talented ● English Language Learners ● Parental Involvement ● School Leadership Teams ● Special Education ● Career and Technical Education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance Teams ● Health Teams
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Administrative Activities of Counselors

Coordination of Programs and Data Input	District counselors are coordinators of the following programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parental Involvement ● Master Scheduling (Secondary) ● Student Success Plans (Secondary)
Chairing Committees and Meetings	District counselors are chairs of the following committees and meetings: - Parental Involvement
Duties	District counselors do not have any required duties in which they supervise students in common areas.

Orientation and Transition Activities

Van Buren School District provides the following activities to help students transition between buildings and/or into a new school:

- When students are transitioning from one building to another, the school the students are moving to will send counselors, teachers, and other representatives to the school the students will be coming from.
- Open House activities are held on all campuses before the beginning of the school year and give an opportunity for parents and students to meet teachers and become acquainted with the school building.
- New students who come to the school at any point in the school year meet with the counselors and are then paired with another student who helps them learn their way around the school and becomes a peer buddy and a point of contact. The counselors follow up with new students periodically to ensure a successful transition.

Annual Calendar Overview

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES		CONTINUOUS ACTIVITIES
August	Back to School Open House - District Building Personal Connections - District	Advisory - VBFA
September	Orientations - District Suicide Prevention - Secondary	CAPS- VBHS

October	Bullying Prevention Campaign - District Family/Teacher Conferences - District	Impact/Snack Packs - District
November	Gratitude/Mindfulness - District	Spirit Week - District
December	Community Outreach - District Angel Tree - District	
January	Building Personal Connections - District Orientations - District	
February	Great Kindness Challenge - District	
March	Transition Days - District Family/Teacher Conferences - District Student Success Plans - Middle Level & Secondary	
April	Transition Days - District Kindergarten Registration - Elementaries Award Ceremonies/Banquets - Districts	
May	5th Grade CAMP - Elementaries Award Ceremonies/Banquets - District	

Core Counseling Curriculum

Social and Emotional Learning Activities	
Elementary	GUIDE for Life Individual counseling Small group counseling Whole group/classroom lessons
Middle Level	GUIDE for Life Individual Counseling Whole group/classroom lessons
Secondary	GUIDE for Life Individual Counseling Small Group Counseling Partnered with

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monarch 61 Project ● 100 Families ● Alternative Education Provide Referrals for Outside Counseling Agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School-Based Counseling ● Family Counseling ● Family Resources
Academic & Career Planning Activities	
Elementary	Classroom counseling lessons Career Day Individual counseling Small group counseling
Middle Level	8th: Student Success Plans Freshman Orientation
Secondary	Student Success Plans 4 Year Planning Transcript Checks CAPs Meetings College & Career Fair Response to Intervention Individual Counseling
Tools and Resources	
The G.U.I.D.E. for Life Essential Skills ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors Naviance, Grades 6-12 Monarch 61 Project	

Family Engagement

Schools utilize communication software, parent involvement nights, family events, and social media to connect with families and develop a relationship with them to support students in the school and the home.

Community Involvement

Public Speakers

School Trips to Community Business
Connecting Educators to Business via Chamber of Commerce

V. Accountability

Program Self Assessment

The counselors in the district completed the self-assessment found in the Arkansas School Counselor Toolkit on pages 16-21. The assessment was completed in three grade bands: Elementary (K-5), Middle (6-8), and Secondary (9-12). The results can be found [here](#).

Stakeholder Meeting

Access the following links to see examples of stakeholder presentations done in our schools.

[Parent and Family Involvement](#)

[Title 1](#)