

MEMORANDUM

TO: West Virginia School Counselors

FROM: Barbara Ashcraft Brady, Ph.D., School Counseling Coordinator
Division of Teaching and Learning

Carla Williamson, Executive Director, Office of Instruction
Division Lead, Teaching and Learning

Subject: Update on Counseling Support Provided by WVDE

Date: September 7, 2012




We welcome each of you to the 2012-2013 school year. By now you have finalized the student schedules and welcomed and enrolled the new students and their families. We hope that each of you are looking forward to a great year filled with joy, laughter and success as you strive to attain your goals and assist your students as they strive to attain theirs.

Just as there have been changes in our schools and districts across the state, there have been changes within the organization of the West Virginia Department of Education and one of those changes involves our support for school counselors. Counseling is now located in the Office of Instruction, and we believe this move to be positive in nature. As the country moves toward evidence-based education and embraces next generation content standards and assessments, while identifying college and career readiness standards for all students, it is imperative that we closely examine the content of our academic counseling expectations. The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Literacy and Mathematics launched new expectations for our students and our schools, our teachers, our administrators and our counselors. Representatives from various states across the country are currently drafting new standards for science and the arts. West Virginia teachers have used the Social Studies Framework created collaboratively by various states to design Next Generation Standards for Social Studies that went into effect in K-12 classrooms this fall. Having counseling support housed within the Office of Instruction is allowing us to have meaningful conversations that will lead to better academic support services for all students.

Due to the many changes taking place, we determined it best to postpone the fall counselor workshops until spring 2013. This postponement will allow us time to evaluate the needs of all counselors relevant to the many changes taking place within our education system. We are also in the process of working with other offices within WVDE to design a capacity-building model for assisting school counselors in their professional growth. We believe it is critical that we create the capacity for counselor support and professional growth within each RESA and county, and we are looking at the possibility of creating a cadre of counselors within each RESA who collectively demonstrate expertise in all areas of counseling. The professional development of this cadre will be supported by the WVDE staff and, in turn, the cadre members will support their colleagues at all programmatic levels within the RESA. We will be in a better position to explain this evolving model and other services at the spring conference for counselors.

We embrace the challenge of designing our work to better support the state superintendent's and State Board's mission and building capacity to meet this challenge. We look forward to continuing to support school counselors as you work to support all students' academic, career, and personal/social development with the goal of advancing the academic achievement of each student.