THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS IN WICHITA, KANSAS

by

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INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing recognition of the need for an adequate school program for the educable mentally retarded children in Wichita. Before a program can be properly implemented there is a need for proper identification of those regarded as retarded. Once they have been identified as mentally retarded they must be properly placed in a special class where a specialized curriculum is provided. When these students complete their work in this special program someone must assume the responsibility of helping them obtain gainful employment. The objective, of making them worthwhile and happy citizens, can be fulfilled only by proper identification, preparation, and placement of the retarded student.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purposes of this study were: (1) To evaluate the assessment and diagnostic program for identifying mentally retarded students in Wichita; (2) To evaluate the present program for placement of these retarded students both in the special education of the school and on the job; (3) To determine the counselor's responsibilities in the areas of identification and placement.

PROCEDURES

Current policies and practices of the Wichita Public Schools were determined through interviews with administrators in the departments of special education and guidance. The information received was evaluated by comparing it with procedures recommended by recognized authorities and specialists in the field of mental retardation and special education.

From this comparison some suggestions were made in an attempt to improve and upgrade the program of identification and placement of the mentally retarded student. In order to implement these suggestions recommendations concerning the responsibilities of the school counselor to the special education program have been made.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Diagnosis. In this paper the term diagnosis refers to the attempt of identifying and evaluating the level of the individual's social, mental, and physical competencies.

Placement. Two uses of this term are differentiated. First, the word placement applies to the individual's placement in a specialized class for mentally retarded within the educational system. Secondly, it applies to the individual's placement in an occupational setting from the classroom to a full time job and all the intermediate steps therein.

Educable Mentally Retarded. An individual classified as retarded yet possessing sufficient intelligence to care for himself and for all intent and purpose capable of living wholly or partially independently. I. Q. range is approximately 50-75.

Retarded. In this paper whenever the word retarded appears it is presented as a shortened form of educable mentally retarded.

Counselor. A person qualified to work with and counsel students in the area of education and its accompanying problems, as well as mild individual and personal problems.*

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*For specific requirements and responsibilities refer to: Certificate Handbook - State of Kansas, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Printer, 1963.

School Psychologist. A person qualified to work with students in the area of education who seemingly have atypical characteristics and more serious personal problems.*

LIMITATIONS

This paper is limited to and pertains only to the Wichita Public Schools, the counseling program, and the special education program for retarded children therein, up to the time of this writing.

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

It is quite apparent from the readings that there is a need for considerable work in the area of mental retardation within the public schools.

Currently there are only about 250,000 of the nation's one and one-fourth million school-age retarded children enrolled in special education programs in public schools. Diagnostic and evaluative services and facilities for identification are scarce.

"Counseling programs in the schools must be extended and strengthened; far too frequently young people who are retarded complete the special education program of the public schools only to be lost to vocational training opportunities."[1]

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*For specific requirements and responsibilities refer to: Certificate Handbook - State of Kansas, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Printer, 1963.

[1]"President's Panel on Mental Retardation Relating to Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Training," Exceptional Children, May, 1963, vol. 29, pp. 425-429.

The President's Panel on Mental Retardation pointed out that more than 75,000 of the retarded youth who leave school each year have a potential for self-support. It was recommended that if the productive capacities of the nation's mentally retarded are to be used and preserved there must be vocational evaluation, counseling, and job placement all in coordination with the entire school program. It was also recommended that counseling services for parents be made available to provide them with an adequate understanding of the employment potentials of their children.[2]

LITERATURE ON DIAGNOSIS AND PLACEMENT

There has been a great deal of expressed concern, both spoken and written, regarding the prevalence of retarded students in our communities and our failure to provide adequately for them.

Much of the difficulty has been in proper diagnosis and evaluation and then knowing where to place them. A small portion of the studies and work being done in this area will be presented to show what those working in the field of mental retardation generally believe and agree upon.

The extreme cases of retardation, those generally falling below an I. Q. of 50, are not too difficult to identify. However, there is extreme difficulty in diagnosing and properly identifying those called educable retarded with an I. Q. falling approximately between 50-70.

Louttit lists 6 general areas that should be investigated if a "complete diagnosis" of the individual is to be effected. These areas are: (1) psychometric examination, (2) educational examination, (3) social

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[2] Loc. cit.

history, (4) developmental history, (5) family history, and (6) physical examination.[3]

Most of the writers would agree that in the area of psychometrics there should be at least one verbal and one nonverbal performance test and these should be supplemented by a variety of tests whenever possible. A measure of social competence and development should be included. Information resulting from a social history does not give cause or diagnosis, rather it often supports material already acquired.

Because of the fact that many times students are improperly placed for one reason or another, Burt's point of view is reviewed.

> The diagnosis, it will be seen, rests on a careful evaluation of data from half a dozen sources--environmental, genealogical, developmental, physical, psychological, and social. Throughout, the main points to be established are whether the patient displays such inefficiency in his daily adjustments as to render him a case for administrative action, and, if so, whether the inefficiency is due, not directly to physical or environmental handicaps, but to an incomplete development of mind.[4]

When a diagnosis concerning retardation is requested it is well to keep in mind some of Richey's thoughts. A person suspected of being retarded, it has been proven, will come closer to his actual level of work if the tests are administered in a much more personal atmosphere. With this type of individual it is advantageous to compliment and even reward the student. It may even be desirable to have the parent participate in the testing situation. While administering the tests it is better to work

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[3]C. M. Louttit, Clinical Psychology of Exceptional Children, p. 97.

[4]Sir Cyril Burt, The Subnormal Mind, p. 87.

for upper limits of work rather than an exact basal.[5]

> Over and above specific tests chosen for special purposes, it is desirable to administer one non-language test to every suspected retardate. Because of their superior standardization, it is desirable to administer the Stanford Binet or the Wechsler W.I.S.C. in addition to any other tests used.[6]

To this point most of the material has presented a procedure of diagnosis revolving around test scores and other controlled sources. Doll emphasizes the need for observation which can show some continuity in the student's behavior.

> An evaluation of suspected mental retardation requires a consideration of much more than degree of intelligence. It requires, in the first instance, evidence of social inadequacy or incompetence, as well as intellectual inadequacy. It requires further, that the social incompetencies should be a consequence of the mental incompetence. Still further, it requires that the overall retardation be developmental within the period of normal child growth--that is, within the school years.[7]

Closely related to the placement of retarded students is their proper classification which results from the evaluation and diagnosis. Bardon and Alprin include in their writings the need for a thorough physical examination, a comprehensive battery of tests, interviews with various persons having pertinent information about the child, and the gathering of historical and anecdotal data as essential elements of the classification system.[8]

The dilemma of whether or not a student should profit from placement

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[5]Marjorie H. Richey, "Psychological Procedures in the Diagnosis of Mental Retardation," Exceptional Children, September, 1960, 27:6.

[6]Ibid., p. 8.

[7]Edgar A. Doll, "The Mentally Retarded," Exceptional Children, May, 1961, 27:487.

[8]Jack I. Bardon and Stanley I. Alprin, "The Educational Classification of Mentally Retarded Children," Exceptional Children, January, 1961, 27:236.

in a special class frequently confronts counselors, psychologists, and school administrators.

The dilemma seems to evolve primarily from problems related to: (1) validity of diagnosis and evaluation, (2) eligibility of a subnormal student for special class placement, and (3) the difference between functional and actual retardation and other possible causes for apparent or suspected retardation.[9]

With regard to point number one there is sufficient evidence to state that the validity of the test being used is closely related to the ability of the one administering the test and his judgement in proper selection of that test best suited for the individual. Secondly, as many writers have pointed out, retardation from an intellectual point of view is not sufficient to request special class placement. Thirdly, and possibly the most difficult of all, is the elimination of those from the class of mentally retarded who are, for lack of a better term, "pseudo-retarded." That is, they appear retarded mentally as the result of cultural deprivation, educational retardation (inability to read), emotional disturbance, or functional retardation (brain damage).

Even though all of the above mentioned need special class placement they should not be placed in a class for the mentally retarded for they do not have similar problems.

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[9]Ivan Z. Holowinsky, "Special Child or Retarded Child? Some Problems of a Special Class Placement," The Training School Bulletin, November, 1963, 60:118.

FINDINGS

Evaluation of Diagnosis

At the time of this writing the Wichita Public Schools did have a specified procedure for introducing students to the special education program.

A recommendation is submitted to the special education office for a student to be admitted to the special education program. The principal of the school making the recommendation includes an administrative report (attendance, truancy, and conduct) and a report from the school counselor which includes a test score for the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test. Following the score there is, sometimes, a brief resume of the results and conclusions drawn from the test data. Prior to the principal's recommendation or action, a teacher or teachers usually make recommendations to the principal based on the results of low school work or social and/or emotional problems in the classroom. Standard information concerning the family is also available (address, parents, parents' occupation, et cetera).

More times than not the special education department must make a decision with no more information than this as to whether or not admittance to special education is desirable.

This is not to say that this was all that was asked for in the way of guiding information. However, in many cases additional information was just not available and no apparent way of obtaining it.

This type of student assessment and diagnosis leaves many questionable gaps in understanding and knowing the "whole" child. In many instances one intelligence test score is the deciding factor which in itself

is a major fallacy in assessment. Challenging such a method Rothstein states, "The emphasis on the mere use of I. Q. and/or M. A. in the diagnosis of the mentally retarded is seriously questioned, especially because of the wide variation among such individuals and within each individual."[10]

There is a fairly widespread agreement that children with mental retardation should not be evaluated only on the basis of information derived from an intelligence test. Rather, the child and his family must be studied from many points of view, in addition to psychometric testing--social, psychiatric, and health.

> This idea cannot be emphasized too strongly for a number of reasons: (1) The child may have a sensory loss which, unless it is carefully evaluated, may lead to an erroneous diagnosis of mental retardation or of the degree of mental retardation; (2) The child may have a social or emotional problem which similarly may be a factor in leading to an erroneous conclusion; (3) The child may have an associated physical handicap or health problem which should be studied, and a plan of recommended treatment made; (4) Some children with mental retardation may have had an associated congenital malformation, as in the case of mental retardation resulting from German measles in the first trimester of the mothers pregnancy. It is for this reason that each child suspected of mental retardation should be seen and personally evaluated by a team of professional personnel representing a number of disciplines.[11]

When a complete understanding of the individual is needed a criteria of specific items should be considered in arriving at a complete diagnosis of mental retardation. Such a list might include: (1) anatomical and physiological considerations; (2) intellectual measures; (3) educational considerations; (4) social characteristics; (5) emotional reactions;

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[10]Jerome H. Rothstein, Mental Retardation, p. 70.

[11]Helen M. Wallace, "School Services for Mentally Retarded Children in Urban Areas," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, January, 1960, 64:679.

(6) temperamental considerations.[12]

If such criteria are used in the assessment, when pulled together, should give information about the extent of the deficit, information relative to the qualitative aspects of the deficit and its emotional consequences, and the reasons for the mental retardation.

It is very possible that one of the most over-looked items in making a diagnosis is the information from an up-to-date physical examination. According to Beller, "Records should always include the current findings of a physical examination."[13]

The two most widely used approaches to assessment and diagnosis of mental retardation are the comprehensive clinic and the public school case conference. "For the large majority of children who are of public school age and who are not too severely retarded, the use of the school guidance, health, and psychological services will suffice."[14]

Thinking back to what was made available to the Special Education Office concerning information on a child and considering what is suggested and recommended in the literature leaves a fairly clear picture of what is needed in Wichita for a complete and competent assessment of children referred to the Special Education Office.

It is not the writers objective to condemn the program of diagnosis, but rather to suggest ways and means for upgrading and improving the program in order that the objectives of special education can be carried out.

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[12]Max L. Hutt and Robert Gibby, The Mentally Retarded Child, p. 28.

[13]E. Kuno Beller, Clinical Processes, p. 93.

[14]Jerome H. Rothstein, Mental Retardation, p. 22.

It should further be pointed out, that once a child is admitted to a special education room all the data pertinent to his placement should be made available to those working with him.

Evaluation of Placement

The second phase of this paper has to do with the program of placement for mentally retarded students.

It must be pointed out that there are two distinct areas of placement. The first is placement within the school and the second is placement on the job.

Once a person has been properly and competently assessed and found to be truly mentally retarded, immediate plans should be made to place him in a special education program.

The special education program in Wichita did not have a specific curriculum through which the student must pass, rather it built a curriculum for each student, to meet that student's needs, from the general curriculum.

In almost every case school placement will occur at the elementary level. It might be well to re-emphasize the fact that diagnosis and assessment are very closely related to a proper school placement.

Special education rooms were found in 15 of the elementary schools in Wichita, employing 23 special education teachers. If a child was recommended for a special room and there was not one in his school, permission was granted for him to enroll in a school in another district having the necessary facilities.

Many people maintained the mistaken idea that placement in a special education room was for remedial work and would eventually lead the student

back into a regular school program. This was not the case! Once a student has definitely been diagnosed as mentally retarded he should remain in the special education program provided for him throughout his school career.

At the time of this writing a mentally retarded student spent 6 years in the special education room at the elementary level; 3 years at level I (primary), and 3 years at level II (intermediate). Following the sixth year the students were usually passed on to level III (junior high) to stay with their chronological age peers.

While in the junior high, the students for administrative reasons, are many times dismissed from the special room and placed back in regular classes to make room for new enrollees that are placed in the special education room. This usually takes place following the second year in the junior high special room. In some of the junior high schools conditions are such that it is not always necessary to crowd the older students out of the special room.

Once they have been placed back in the regular curriculum in the junior high school or following their third year in the junior high, mentally retarded students are for the most part left to go their own way.

If school placement is going to be complete it must not only retain the student through junior high but must provide him with a special program through at least 3 years of high school (level IV).

The program of placement at the senior high level should carry over into a pre-vocational program and part-time employment and eventually full-time employment.

According to Sydan, "The school has begun to realise that it is not only responsible for the academic phase of the course of study but also for

the individual's personal, social, and occupational growth, development, and adjustment."[15]

The biggest problems that existed in Wichita at the time of this writing were the shortage of facilities and teachers and the non-existence of a special program at level IV (senior high). Not until these 2 problems are solved will the school placement program be successful in its endeavors.

Just as the school placement must be individualized so must the job placement. As was previously mentioned, at the time of this writing there was not a special education program at the senior high schools. Without a level IV program job placement in conjunction with special education is practically an impossibility. Once the students had been in junior high for 3 years they were either passed on to the high school to become drop-outs or they never enrolled in high school, particularly those over age 16. At the junior high there was no provision for job placement or follow-up for the mentally retarded student. This was due to shortage of teachers and legal entanglements.

An important observation made by Rothstein was as follows:

> A secondary school program for the educable mentally retarded should include a core of common learnings that are directly related to occupational adjustment. Services must include guidance, pre-vocational testing, and try out periods in school exploratory work projects, school work plans, selective job placement, and some degree of supervision in the early phases of employment.[16]

Dinger concludes from his study that there is an imperative need for

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[15]Martin Syden, "Preparation for Work: An Aspect of the Secondary Schools Curriculum for Mentally Retarded Youth," Exceptional Child, February, 1962, 28:325.

[16]Jerome H. Rothstein, Mental Retardation, p. 286.

successful occupational training and placement which is primarily the responsibility of the school.[17]

If job placement is to be successful then all of the different levels of special education must cooperate. Early in their education mentally retarded students must develop attitudes and ideas which are in keeping with personal attributes which will lead to employability. Mentally retarded students must become aware of and understand their limitations. Proper work habits must be developed. Individual skills and abilities already present must be capitalized on. What is simply being said is that placement cannot result from one year of preparation.

Proper job placement for the mentally retarded student should follow various work experiences at school or during school time under close coordination of school class work and part time employment following class work. Even after the student is working full time there should be some follow-up contact by the school.

If such a program for mentally retarded students is to exist in Wichita Public Schools, who is going to make it functional and successful? It is quite clear that no one person can do such a job. However, a team of competently qualified persons could do the job.

This team should include such school personnel as the school nurse, the principal, the special education teacher, the school counselor, and the school psychologist. This does not mean to imply that other classroom teachers and school personnel will not have a part to play. Rather the services of the above mentioned will be called upon regularly to provide

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[17]Jack Dinger, "Former Educable Retarded Pupils," Exceptional Child, March, 1961, 27:35.

a good special education program.

The paper at hand is concerned primarily with the duties and responsibilities of two members of this team. They are the school counselor and school psychologist.

The reason for this concern is the situation which existed in the Wichita School System at the time this paper was written.

Wichita was not hiring school psychologist per se, rather they were urging the school counselors to meet the academic requirements of a school psychologist. The director of guidance services in Wichita explained that over the years the school personnel known as counselors had developed excellent rapport with students, parents, and other school personnel. It was felt that the new title of school psychologist as opposed to counselor would have a deteriorating effect on this relationship that already existed.

Therefore when talking about the counselor's responsibilities to special education in Wichita we are concerned with a "dual role", that as both a school counselor and a school psychologist.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNSELOR REGARDING MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

The following is presented as a means of supporting the necessary premise that a counselor does have responsibilities in working with mentally retarded students:

> We no longer feel that institutionalization of the mentally retarded relieves us of all responsibilities to him, but that each life is a precious one and that each has something unique and valuable to contribute to our way of life.
>
> As the result of this feeling we maintain two ideas: (1) Each member of society has the privilege and right to be developed to

his utmost through all physical and psychological needs; (2) All pupils, unless severely handicapped, should attend school for a minimum number of years.

In response to these ideas the schools have become more complex and the counselor's role has come to play an important part. The counselor has, as one of his responsibilities, the job of aiding each and every student in his school in better adjustment to his environment. If the preceding is accepted then this latter statement must include the mentally retarded.[18]

The Elementary Counselor

In order to better understand these responsibilities it seems desirable to look at them from, first, the elementary counselor's position and secondly, the secondary counselor's position.

Within the elementary counselor's responsibilities to the retarded there appear to be two major areas: (1) identification and (2) school placement.

It is reasonable to assume that the latter is not at all possible without the former.

A recent committee report of the American School Counselor Association identifies the following unique aspect of elementary school guidance: early identification of special needs; child study; close relationship with parents and home; and more emphasis on personality development.[19]

Anderson in his report states, "The early identification of children with problems and making an attempt to meet the needs of such children should be one of, if not the chief, function of guidance in the

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[18]Donald A. Davis, "Counseling the Mentally Retarded," Vocational Guidance Quarterly, Spring, 1957.

[19]"Report of the Committee on Guidance in the Elementary Schools," American School Counselor's Association, Washington, D. C., March, 1959.

elementary schools."[20]

A considerable amount of the elementary counselor's time is used in testing for screening for special education classes and in parent conferences regarding student assignment to a special class.[21] It is also necessary to carry out this testing to meet the state requirements which stipulate that each child must be tested a minimum of once every three years.

In the Wichita Public Schools the elementary counselors give only individual tests. Group tests are administered by the classroom teacher under the supervision of the Department of Research. The counselors, however, assist in the interpretation of group test scores. No psychometrists or school psychologists are presently available, hence, the counselor operates in these areas.

To qualify as an elementary counselor a person needs teaching experience, a Master's Degree, graduate courses in Elementary School Guidance, Techniques of Counseling, Individual Testing, Child Psychology, Organization and Administration of Guidance, and Counseling Practicum.[22]

From what has been said earlier by authorities in the field, it does not seem that the school counselor trained as a counselor is sufficiently prepared to make a proper and adequate diagnosis of atypical individuals.

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[20]Laurence Anderson, "A Study of the Duties Performed by Elementary Counselors," June 9, 1958, p. 6.

[21]Ibid., p. 24.

[22]Laurence Anderson, "Guidance in the Elementary Schools of Wichita, Kansas," September 23, 1961, (Mimeographed).

It is the writer's contention that if the Wichita Public Schools wish to retain their counselors and ask them to perform in this "dual-role" with such a wide scope of responsibilities, they are going to be forced to require the elementary counselors to obtain the additional educational coursework which will prepare them with the skills of a school psychologist.

A school psychologist must have general competencies in special education, 30 hours in general and specific background areas of psychology, 15 hours in evaluation techniques, primarily individual, and 15 hours of school adjustment.

The school psychologist's requirements differ from those of a counselor's in three major ways: (1) The school psychologist is exposed to a wider range of psychological theory, covering all aspects of psychology; (2) The school counselor is not required to have a knowledge of the field of special education (which includes retarded); and (3) The school psychologist has a more intensified and quantitatively broader background in specific areas of individual assessment and adjustment.[23]

Therefore in the area of identification it is suggested and strongly recommended that, in order to do the job, the elementary counselor meet the educational requirements of both the counselor and school psychologist.

This brings us to the second area of the counselor's responsibility, placement. As far as placement is concerned the elementary counselor's only interest is in the area of school placement.

If a good job of identification has been done, the responsibility of

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[23]Paul Ackerman, "The School Psychologist and the Counselor: Who's What, and Why?" Guide Post, February, 1963.

placement is much less difficult. The major problems will be locating a vacancy in the special room, counseling with the parents and child, and interpreting the information to the special teacher. As required by state law, to remain in the special class the student's abilities must be assessed every three years and this is the responsibility of the counselor.

The Secondary Counselor

Peters differentiates between the elementary and secondary counselors in the following way:

> Guidance in the elementary school should assist the pupil to develop a harmonious and integrated personality core through carefully planned school experiences. The secondary school assists adolescents to extend themselves to the optimum in all the various aspects of adolescent and adult living, such as educational planning, career choice, personal relationships, and living with one's self.[24]

After the retarded student has spent his years in grade school he moves with his age group on to the secondary school. If he goes to a junior high school it becomes the counselor's responsibility that the retardate is properly placed in the special room and given a school program which will suit him best. This may require placing the retardate into regular classes such as physical education, art, music, homemaking, industrial arts, or other areas which would be in line with his abilities and interests. This placement would also include any "extra-curricular" activities which might be advantageous for the student.

At the secondary level it will also be necessary to conduct this every third year evaluation to assess the student's abilities and

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[24] Herman J. Peters, "Differential Factors between Elementary and Secondary School Counseling," The School Counselor, October, 1959, 7:3.

achievements to meet state requirements.

As the mentally retarded students move into the final years at the secondary level it becomes someone's responsibility to assist these retarded students in obtaining work experience. It is not expected that all of this would fall on the shoulders of the counselor, but who else has had training in occupations? It would be assumed that at the IV level (senior high) the special class teacher would also work in this area of occupational placement.

It would seem as if there should be as much emphasis placed on occupational placement at the secondary level as there was on identification at the elementary level.

Ideally there would be continuous follow-up on these retarded students once they leave the public school and enter the full-time working force. The counselor with his community contacts and knowledge should assume as much responsibility for knowing where potential jobs are for the retarded students as he should for the "normal" students in his school. This is basic if he accepts the premise presented earlier regarding education for all students.

Besides these special responsibilities of identification, school placement, and occupational placement, the counselor also has his regular responsibilities to these retarded students. Just the same as any other student, the retarded have social, emotional, and academic problems which must be dealt with. The counselor, to meet these responsibilities, must understand the nature of the retarded in order to do a satisfactory and successful job.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Wichita Public Schools are, at the present time, offering an acceptable program for the mentally retarded students.

However, due to the growing acceptance and increased need for such a program, it appeared imperative that some changes be considered to upgrade and further develop this program.

According to authorities working with retarded students one of the basic needs for a good program for retarded students is sufficient information which will provide proper diagnosis and identification and placement. The major items for diagnosis should include: (1) a thorough physical examination; (2) a measure of intelligence; (3) a measure of educational progress; (4) an analysis of social characteristics; and (5) an analysis of emotional stability.

At the time of this writing the program in Wichita was making an effort to reach into a majority of these areas. It was found that in most cases, however, only a measure of intelligence and educational progress were revealed.

This apparent weakness leads us to another point of concern. In Wichita the school counselor was asked to play the dual role of counselor and school psychologist. The main problem extending from this situation was the fact that the training and skills needed were not always available to the individual counselor. Few counselors were trained in both areas.

To extend the work already being done, the high school program, in particular, will need to be reorganized (level IV). The factor which will eventually determine the success or failure of the entire program is the success or failure of the students in the community after they have

graduated.

As this comparison of what existed and what should exist is presented, it seems reasonable to point out that when compared to other school programs in other cities, Wichita is doing as well or better than the majority of them. This, however, should not obscure the fact that when the present program is compared with a truly high quality program, Wichita has a great deal of work before it; that is, if it wants a program for the retarded students to equal the quality of its regular school program.

At this point several recommendations appear to be in order. They are made on the basis of material presented which pertained to what was in effect at the time and what the authorities considered necessary for a successful program.

First, if the counselor's responsibilities are going to include both the work of a counselor and a psychologist then, to do an adequate job, the individual so designated must be trained and competent in the fields of both counseling and school psychology.

Second, if the public schools in Wichita are going to have a program for mentally retarded students they must have an adequate diagnostic program which will provide proper identification of the atypical students.

Once there has been proper identification of these students then a satisfactory and worthwhile job of placement can be accomplished within the school program.

Third, if the initial placement is to be of any value then it will be necessary to start a special class program at the senior high level (level IV) in order that occupational preparation and job placement can be made available to these retarded students. This is in harmony with

the ultimate goal, to make the mentally retarded worthwhile and independent citizens in the community.

If the Wichita Public Schools wish to include in their total curriculum a program for the educable mentally retarded, which is to accomplish the intended goals, they must offer a total program through all levels. In addition to this, the counselors acting as both counselor and school psychologist, must be trained to provide a professional and complete diagnosis of the atypical students and interpret the finding for proper special class placement. And finally, as the retarded student completes his education, the school must help him take his place in society as an employed self-sufficient citizen.

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THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS IN WICHITA, KANSAS

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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The purposes of this study were: (1) To evaluate the assessment and diagnostic program for identifying mentally retarded students in Wichita; (2) To evaluate the present program for placement of these retarded students both in the special education of the school and on the job; (3) To determine the counselor's responsibilities in the areas of identification and placement.

Current policies and practices of the Wichita Public Schools were determined through interviews with administrators in the departments of special education and guidance. The information received was evaluated by comparing it with procedures recommended by recognized authorities and specialists in the field of mental retardation and special education. From this comparison some suggestions were made in an attempt to improve and upgrade the program of identification and placement of the mentally retarded student. In order to implement these suggestions recommendations concerning the responsibilities of the school counselor to the special education program have been made.

The findings of the study indicated that, in Wichita, particularly at the elementary level, the counselor did the work of people that should be professionally trained as both counselor and school psychologist. It was suggested that if this were to be the situation, the counselor should have competencies in both fields to do an adequate job.

It was further discovered, that on the basis of what is recommended by authorities in the field, the program of identification needed considerable strengthening. There is general agreement that proper identification is possible by the inclusion of the following items: (1) a thorough physical examination; (2) a measure of intelligence; (3) a measure of

educational progress; (4) an analysis of social characteristics; and (5) an analysis of emotional stability. This process of identification and diagnosis could result only after people with the necessary skills were available.

Finally, in order to have an adequate program of school and occupational placement two things were needed. First, an educational program at the senior high school level must be developed to provide facilities up to the necessary age. Secondly, the counselor with his occupational information must be in a position to help place these retarded students in jobs the same as any of the so-called "normal" students. This can result only if the counselor has a keen understanding of the mentally retarded students and an awareness of areas in which they might have maximum employability.