

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE
IN THE VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This study examines perceptions of the stakeholders (parents, administrators, faculty members, counselors, and fifth grade students) about the Virginia Beach Elementary Guidance and Counseling Program. A survey was developed by examining guidance goals and a previous study of the program (1993). Questions covered four domains: (1) home-school relationships, (2) student personal development, (3) support for academic growth, and (4) program value. Results are reported in descriptive statistics. Four one-way analyses of variance were used to compare responses of groups in domains. Included are two supplemental analyses about student access to counselors and conditions affecting counselors' work.

Adults agreed promoting closer home-school relationships was a worthwhile goal. Parents felt less positive than administrators, faculty, and counselors that the program promoted home-school relationships, that parents met with counselors, and that parents received information and were being afforded appropriate parent educational opportunities.

Adults agreed that promoting closer home-school relationships was a worthwhile goal. Means scores ranged from 3.3 to 3.7 on a 4 point scale. (4.0 represented strongly agree.) Administrators, faculty, and counselors felt more positively than parents that the program promoted home-school relationships, that parents met with counselors, and that parents received information and were being afforded appropriate parent educational opportunities. Mean scores ranged from 2.9 to 3.9.

Adults felt student personal development was a worthwhile goal. Mean scores ranged from 3.3 to 3.8. All adult groups felt positive about counseling programs helping students understand themselves and others better, the program having a positive impact on children's personal development, and the program helping students cope with developmental changes. Mean scores for these adults ranged from 3.0 to 3.8.

In support for academic growth, parents and faculty gave slightly lower scores, although all groups felt positive about counseling programs. Mean scores ranged from 2.8 to 3.8.

Responses to open-ended questions supported these ratings. When asked about suggestions for program improvement, two responses given most often were more elementary counselors were needed and more communication with parents would be helpful. When asked for other comments,

primary themes were the program is positive, the program is helpful, and counselors are good.

Overall perception is the elementary guidance and counseling program is valuable. Findings suggest program administrators may want to consider reviewing home-school relationships, support provided by counselors for the academic program, and counselor-student ratio.

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CHAPTER 1: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Background

Today elementary children in the United States come from one of the most diverse societies in the world. Along with a myriad of opportunities unequalled, some children have had experiences of negative impact to their young lives. The severity and number of social, psychological, and emotional problems young children bring to school with them have increased dramatically in recent years.

One only needs to examine current periodicals to realize the negative factors influencing elementary children. Every seven minutes a child is killed or injured by a gun. Every day 15 children die from firearms (Finlay, 1996). On an average day in Virginia two children under age two die, and one child under age 14 dies. Five youths (ages 12-17) are arrested (for a violent crime), and 112 young people are processed for delinquency. On an average day in Virginia, of children ages 12-17, eleven girls have babies, and fourteen children are diagnosed with a sexually transmitted diseases (Galano, Nezlek, & Wood, 1997).

Today many of our elementary children are threatened by the breakdown of moral, family, and community values. Drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, domestic violence, AIDS,

and random gun violence are touching the lives of our children daily (Finlay, 1996).

In a recent USA Today, veteran teachers were asked to compare today's student with former students. Teachers describe today's students as being less respectful to authority, less ethical, less moral and less responsible than students in the past. Teachers describe current students as far more self-centered (Carey & Jerding, 1997).

In 1994 in our nation, 125,000 youths were arrested daily for violent crimes, day 2,700 young girls got pregnant, 2,833 children dropped out of school, 2,660 children were born into poverty, and 7,962 children were reported abused or neglected (Finlay, 1996). In 1994, a total of 3.1 million children were reported abused or neglected in the United States. An estimated 7 million children ran away each year and another 300,000 children were homeless. An estimated 3 million children have serious emotional problems, and many go untreated (Finlay, 1996). The need for early intervention and prevention is clear.

Elementary guidance counseling programs are designed to support the students as they prepare for the future. The elementary teacher, more than ever, is seeking help with the students' affective needs (Holmgren, 1996). Elementary guidance has been in existence for more than 50 years

(Holmgren, 1996). One of the earliest formal programs in Virginia began in Roanoke County in 1973 (Lehman, 1990).

In May of 1986, the Virginia State Board of Education adopted a resolution calling for statewide elementary school guidance programs to be established by 1990. The requirement included staffing of a minimum of one counselor to every five hundred elementary students.

In 1987, the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, in conjunction with the Appalachian Educational Laboratory, surveyed principals and superintendents in Virginia about elementary guidance. The results showed an overwhelming desire for a program that would provide "individual and group counseling" support to young students (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals and Appalachia Education Laboratory, 1987).

Elementary guidance programs in Virginia Beach have been staffed in accordance with regulation 8.1 of the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia and overall goals stated in regulation 6.3 (Appendix A). The Virginia Department of Education Division of Pupil Personnel Programs developed program guidelines for elementary school counselors. The Virginia State goals are broad guidelines aimed at early identification of children's problems and preventive interventions (Appendix B). In the city of Virginia Beach,

the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) also accredits elementary schools. These guidelines specify that the professional staff of each elementary school shall include guidance personnel (Appendix C). The goals of the elementary program were based on the developmentalist philosophy best exemplified in the works of Muro and Dinkmeyer (see Appendix D) for a more detailed description. According to his philosophy, elementary school guidance programs should stress individual and group activities that are designed for all children as they move through social, psychological, and emotional developmental stages. The program guidelines list developmental ages and counseling implications.

The goals and objectives of the Virginia Elementary Guidance and Counseling Program begin by stating that the program aids children in the mastering of academic, social, and personal development. The first goal is to develop academic skills and competencies. The second program goal is to help children understand themselves. The third goal is to help children understand others. Goal four is to help students acquire problem-solving skills. Goal five is to help children become self-directed. Goal six is to help students develop a positive attitude toward school. The seventh goal is to acquire positive attitudes for learning, and the last goal is to understand the world of work. These goals are

prefaced by an explanation that they are best acquired by a collaborative effort among counselors, parents, faculty members, administrators and other school personnel (Appendix B).

The Virginia Beach Public School Division goals were based on the goals of the Virginia Department of Education. There are eighteen separate goals (Appendix E). Many of them relate to the core research questions of this paper. For example, the fifteenth Virginia Beach elementary counseling goal is to promote closer home-school relationships. The seventeenth goal goes along with this. It says:

- Collaborate with parents, faculty members, administrators, and other appropriate personnel to meet the needs of all students.

The second, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth, and ninth goals deal with students' personal and academic growth. They are:

- Aid the student in recognizing his individuality, dignity, and worth.
- Assist students with educational, vocational, social, and personal development.
- Help students to understand and learn to cope with academic, emotional, social, and physical changes occurring in the transition from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

- Help students to acquire realistic understandings of themselves and to utilize this information for decision making.
- Help students develop healthy peer relationships.
- Help students become self-directed and responsible for their own behavior.

The third major focus of the survey questions stems from support for academic growth. The third, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and sixteenth guidance goals are aimed at providing academic support (and more personal development). They are:

- Help students develop positive attitudes toward school, the community, and society.
- Advise students in appropriate course selection to help them benefit as much as possible from the educational program.
- Foster positive attitudes toward learning and the development of effective study skills.
- Identify and resolve student problems that interfere with learning.
- Assist students and parents to obtain needed special school and/or community services.

Although some goals overlap, a specific focus on personal development and academic support with a parent and faculty

member partnership is the primary function of elementary guidance programs in the state. These goals are also the primary function of the Virginia Beach Schools Guidance and Counseling Program.

The Virginia Beach guidance goals not directly examined by the surveyed publics of this study are one, six, thirteen, fourteen, and eighteen. These, too, are important goals of the program.

- Acquaint all students with guidance services.
- Offer individual and group counseling for all students.
- Assist faculty members with career education programs in the content areas.
- Assist students in formulating plans for the future by encouraging them to continue a program of advanced education and/or to enter the world of work.
- Conduct a variety of evaluative activities to indicate strengths and weaknesses of guidance services within each school.

The researcher felt these goals could be better measured by checking the daily activities of counselors in schools. This could be with logs or lesson plans. It would be difficult for all stakeholders to be familiar with these specific activities.

To carry out the goals listed above, elementary guidance counselors provide classroom lessons, small group and individual counseling, consulting, and coordinating in a sixty-forty ratio. At least sixty percent of their time is spent in direct individual and group counseling according to Virginia Department of Education Guidelines, and no more than 40% of the workday is to be spent in supportive activities (consulting and coordinating). Small and large group lessons of Virginia elementary counselors stress self-care, safety, problem solving, conflict resolution, self-esteem, values, and attitudes.

The Statement of the Problem

In the fall of 1997, the State Board of Education revised the Standards of Accreditation. Elementary counseling, along with family life education became optional for Virginia school districts. Political debates ensued over the State Board's actions. This new regulation offered the choice of funding used for guidance counselors or for reading specialists as support personnel at the elementary level (Appendix F).

In the spring of 1998 in actions of both the House and Senate, legislation restored the requirement of guidance counseling in Virginia's elementary schools. In April 1998, the Governor vetoed the bill re-establishing elementary

counseling (HB 303/SB 205). Once again local school boards have the option to choose elementary counselors or reading teachers. In light of the state's fluctuating position on the elementary guidance counseling program, it is important to examine the program's merit.

In order to determine the continued worth of a program, it is important to examine its value. Evaluation as it relates to quality programs is defined as the judging of the value of information, ideas, or products (Arcaro, 1995). In order to determine the value, data must be collected. This study is intended to collect and examine data about the Virginia Beach Elementary School Guidance Program to add to the information about Virginia's state guidance programs and to contribute to stakeholders' perceptions of on going program evaluation.

The Significance of the Study

In 1992, a team of nine persons was appointed by the Virginia Beach City Public School Board to evaluate the Elementary Guidance Program. A chairperson from Virginia Commonwealth University was hired to direct the team's research. Questions were drafted and a thorough evaluation was conducted. All participants in the survey, regardless of their role, perceived the elementary guidance program as

valuable. A particularly affirmative response came from administrators. When asked, "Generally, do you feel that contact with the counselor(s) at your school has been beneficial to the children?" 100% of the responding principals answered yes (Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 1993).

It has been nine years since the Virginia State Department of Education established elementary guidance programs. It has been six years since a program evaluation has been conducted for the Virginia Beach Elementary Guidance Program. This survey will help to determine the value that stakeholders place on the program. Is the elementary school guidance program valued? Is the program beneficial and worthwhile? Or do stakeholders hold a view different from the finding of 1993? This study will provide additional data about the Virginia Beach Elementary School Guidance Program to contribute to the on going program evaluation.

The results of this study could be useful to the local school board, should it need to reallocate staff. The findings compared across the groups should be helpful to the Department of Guidance and Counseling. Elementary guidance counselors, principals, and school planning counsels may find the information useful in planning programs and improving practices.

The Purpose

A survey was conducted to examine the opinions of the stakeholders about the Virginia Beach City Schools Elementary Guidance Program. Stakeholders in this study include parents, principals, faculty members, guidance counselors, and students.

The Research Questions

What are the perceptions of the parents, administrators, faculty members, guidance counselors, and students about the elementary guidance program? Is promoting home-school relationships an important goal? Does the program promote closer home-school relationships? (Is facilitating students' personal development an important goal?) Does the program facilitate students' personal development? Does the program support academic growth? Is the elementary guidance program worthwhile as perceived by the stakeholders identified in this study? Are there significant differences among the parents, administrators, and faculty members with respect to their opinion about each domain? The research questions are covering four main domains: home-school relationships, student personal development, support for academic growth, and general value of the program.

Questions were developed from the goals of the program and previous research. This survey differed from the 1993 survey in focus and design. The 1993 survey focused on program value, ratio of counselors, adequate facilities, and program planning. It provided respondents with a fewer items and yes/no response categories. (The goal of both surveys was to assist in determining program value.) In the current survey questions were drafted by the researcher and reviewed and revised by counselors and the Research Division of the Department of Accountability and Technology of the Virginia Beach City Schools. They were further revised by the researcher. Questions number two, fourteen, seventeen, and twenty-two on the counselor's survey remained the same with the exception of the response scale.

Limitations

This study was confined to the Virginia Beach City Elementary Schools. It addressed only elementary students' needs and elementary guidance and counseling program goals in this school division (Appendix E). This study was limited to the examination of several of the goals of the Virginia Beach Elementary Guidance Program. Some goals were not directly addressed in this study. Those not addressed were acquainting students with guidance services, offering individual and group

counseling, and developing career plans. The first two were addressed in the 1993 survey. A comprehensive questionnaire examining each of the eighteen goals would have been too lengthy to expect a high rate of response. For a list of all the goals of the Virginia Beach guidance program, see Appendix E.

Another methodological limitation may have been in the technical way students were surveyed. Student response rate was low, perhaps due to the need to acquire parent permission and a release signed by the student before completing the survey.

Definitions

The following terms are defined for use in this paper.

Elementary

School Counselor: Numerous textbooks are devoted to defining the role of the elementary school counselor. The following table represents three experts view of elementary counselors in the domains examined in this paper (Table 1).

Evaluation of

School Programs: Collecting data to measure improvements or develop solutions (Arcaro, 1995).

Perceptions:

Thoughts or feelings characterized as mental impressions.

Public Opinion:

Collective attitudes or thoughts of the public.

Quality Programs:

According to Deming & Juran, quality programs meet the needs of the user

(student, society). They are characterized by customer focus, commitment, and regular evaluation for continuous improvement (Arcaro, 1995).

Stakeholders: For the purpose of this study, stakeholders will be defined as guidance counselors, parents, faculty members, students, and building level administrators. There are many other groups not included in this study that are recognized as stakeholders. Examples are taxpayers, support personnel, and central office staff.

Survey: A process of collecting attitudes, opinions, or knowledge of a group of people.

Overview

This local study will help to answer the question about the value of elementary guidance programs in the Virginia Beach Public School System. The results of this study on one of the largest school systems in the state may be of interest to other Virginia school systems, as well as to anyone with a similar program, or considering developing a similar elementary guidance program.

A review of the literature is presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Three explains the methodology of the study. Chapter Four is a discussion of the results. Conclusions, discussion, limitations, and recommendations comprise Chapter Five.

Table 1

The Role of the Elementary Counselor

	Home/School Relationships	Student Personal Growth	Support for Academic Program
Robert D. Myrick	"Parent education can be a part of a counselor's responsibilities, and some counselors are very active in this respect."	"For our purposes, the term 'school guidance' will refer to a generic set of personal development services offered to students. Counseling is one of those services."	"Developmental counselors base their work on helping students to learn more effectively and efficiently."
Janet C. Heddeshimer	"In addition to group guidance for children, group guidance for the staff and parents can also be an important part of the guidance program."	"In elementary school guidance program development and management, a counselor must consider what changes and development are expected in children's behavioral strategies."	"The guidance program is a subsystem within the larger system of the entire school."
Don Dinkmeyer & Edson Cadwell	"Group activities with parents appear to be an increasing part of the responsibility of the elementary school counselor."	"The guidance process focuses on restoring and facilitating growth factors."	"The child must believe that academic competence will increase the possibility of his gratifying his own personal motives."

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of literature begins with an overview of survey research and includes several recent studies of elementary guidance programs. It includes a variety of perspectives on elementary counseling program evaluation and moves from the past to the present.

Survey Research

The history of and ideas about collecting public opinion can be found in 18th century philosophy. Beginning in the early part of the 20th century with the beginnings of empirical research, the study of public opinion was refined and extended. Opinion generally is distinguishable from fact but relates to a cognitive state of knowing. Public opinion is most often equal to popular opinion or to collective opinion. As early as 1780, French writers used public opinion interchangeably with "common will," "public spirit," and "public conscience." In the 19th century, public opinion was viewed as the voice of the middle class, as a safeguard against misrule or as a measurement of progress. By the 20th century, public opinion had been analyzed and critical notice was given to the non-rational and emotional aspects of public opinion (Price, 1992).

Some of the dilemmas about public opinion continue. Five concerns are notable, the first being the lack of competence. Does the public have access to the facts relevant to decision making? The second concern is the lack of resources. Does the public have enough information to make a judgement? Third is the concern over the power of the majority. Will important minority views be asserted or lost? Fourth is the susceptibility of the public to emotional persuasion. Is the media able to manipulate public opinion? Fifth is the concern over domination of the elite. Is the general public feeling powerless and apathetic (Price, 1992)?

In light of these concerns, public opinion surveys continue to produce important public responses. Today, the general public has increased responsibility and increased knowledge in decision making. Citizens find there is no limit to access of knowledge. Public opinion surveys provide a means for the public to voice their ideas without going through a political representative. The designing of the survey instrument enables one to select and define the issues.

A stakeholders' survey can yield useful information for decision-makers of public services. Surveys can help determine public needs, wants, and preferences in spending tax dollars. Surveys can also point the way to best deliver

public services and implement policy. Surveys can help evaluate public policies and programs.

Survey information is useful in translating popular opinion into public policy (Foltz, 1996). Since 1969, the Gallup Institute has conducted polls about public schools.

Through the decades following the first Gallup poll, discipline has been identified as the number one problem of schools. Another Gallup Poll conclusion was that problems in schools could only be solved if parents become more involved. Additional findings suggest parents are willing to become involved and want their children to be successful in school and in life. Findings support that working together, problem by problem, is the most favorable method of resolving school issues (Phi Delta Kappa, 1978). A major goal of elementary guidance programs is to strengthen this bond.

School Guidance and Counseling Program Evaluation

In the book, Organizing and Evaluating Elementary School Guidance Services: Why, What, and How? Brown from the University of Virginia tells us that, "Failure to keep pace at a time of increased demand for public accountability has critical consequences for the profession" (Brown, 1977, p. 214). According to Brown, continuous evaluation is vital to positive program development.

Brown also reminds us that change is inevitable and programs in education are not isolated. Programs affect more than just the recipient group. Good program evaluation involves participation of all the stakeholders. This participation assures more effective evaluation and program planning (Brown, 1977).

Demand for accountability can be a response to program effectiveness or program improvement. Identifying the stakeholders, clarifying the purposes, and specifying program objectives are the first tasks leading to accountability (Bleuer, 1983).

Descriptions of Effective Guidance Programs

Walz & Ellis (1992) discuss the characteristics of three exemplary guidance programs. These programs were chosen for their effectiveness. What made these programs special? The programs were comprehensive, invitational and well integrated into the school. They all had a strong commitment to *Kaizen* (continuous improvement)(Walz & Ellis, 1992, p. 61). These exemplary programs focus on thinking styles, decision processes, and outcome goals. They are focused on improving the human condition. Students and staff see these programs as making an important difference in their accomplishments.

Gerstein & Lichtman (1990) searched the nation for the best elementary guidance programs. Ten of the best programs are discussed in their book. The book shares best practices in the field of comprehensive developmental elementary school guidance and counseling. A panel of experts chose the programs. Each panelist used a four-point Likert scale to rate each of the nearly 200 programs nominated. The programs were rated in terms of their objectives, their strengths, their exemplary features, and their innovative, unusual or highly effective practices. Each program had unique features that responded to the needs of their students. All programs contained an evaluation component that sought the input of one or more stakeholders' groups. Needs assessments and goal setting were generally accomplished on a yearly basis for each of the ten exemplary elementary guidance programs.

Research Studies

In addition to elementary school guidance and counseling program evaluation studies, there are several recent research studies about elementary guidance and counseling programs. Several of these studies focus on elementary guidance and counseling program value. The Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory did an early (1987) joint study. This study

confirmed a consensus among Virginia's elementary principals and superintendents about elementary guidance programs. A random sample of 700 elementary school principals was chosen and all 137 superintendents were surveyed.

The survey had three parts. Part One was demographic data and general support for the elementary guidance program. Part Two asked for a ranking of the duties of the guidance counselor. Part Three asked respondents to rank concerns regarding implementation. Three hundred and fifty principals responded for a 50% response rate and eighty-five school superintendents responded for a 61% response rate.

Part One revealed the appropriate demographic data. Thirty-six percent of the principals had experience with elementary guidance programs. A few of these respondents had attended regional orientation meetings designed to define elementary guidance programs.

Part Two of the survey showed that all superintendents and principals knew about the new statewide elementary guidance program and the 60/40-time rule. All respondents felt the primary function of counselors would be to provide individual and group counseling. The second function was to work with school personnel to foster effective learning climates. The third most important function was to assist parents with positive strategies in child rearing.

In Part Three, when asked about concerns in implementing the program, both groups felt funding a full-time counselor would be their first concern. The availability of qualified guidance personnel would be their second concern.

Results showed that both groups strongly supported elementary guidance programs and the master's degree requirement for staffing. Both principals and superintendents also agreed strongly that counselors should function in individual and group counseling (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals and Appalachia Education Laboratory, 1987).

In 1985, Boser directed a project to study elementary guidance counseling in the state of Tennessee. In review of literature, Boser concluded that guidance programs are best when based on local needs and should be evaluated in terms of their goals. This study was based on six schools with elementary guidance programs that had been established for more than one year. Boser made a series of visits to each school. Interviews were conducted and surveys collected from principals, students, parents, and staff members. A five-point rating scale was used to determine the extent to which the school counselor was meeting the objectives of the program.

Principals gave high scores (4s and 5s) to the counselors when asked if they were meeting their goals. Students rated the counselors high on a level of student contact. Students also perceived the counselor as someone they could turn to for help and receive it. Parents responded to the question, "Do you feel there is a need for an elementary school counselor?" Ninety-one percent said yes, and 89% said they would feel free to contact the counselor about their child. Staff members in all schools responded that guidance counselors were a necessary part of the elementary program at their school.

Ninety percent of the students felt better after talking to a counselor. Ninety-nine percent of the parents who had talked to a school counselor felt the counselor had been helpful to their child. The strongest indicator of effectiveness was from staff members, students, parents, and principals. Ninety-nine percent of all respondents in all schools sampled felt there was a need for an elementary guidance counselor. The overall conclusion in Boser's study is that guidance counselors are perceived as effective in schools where they are employed (Boser, 1985).

In 1989, a study of the elementary guidance programs was conducted by Sattes and Miller. The Kentucky Association of School Administrators, Kentucky Department of Education and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory jointly sponsored this

study. The study began by asking all Kentucky elementary guidance counselors to nominate the most effective programs they knew. An interview process was conducted yielding 36 programs from Kentucky, Florida, Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee, and West Virginia nominated as the most effective programs known. In the second stage of interviews, principals and guidance counselors from the 36 programs were interviewed with a set of open-ended questions. Since the questions were open-ended, category responses were determined at the end of the interview. When counselors were asked to describe the key activities that made their programs successful, 95% of the twenty-two counselors attributed success to individual and group counseling. When principals were asked what makes their guidance program effective, over 80% of the 26 principals responded that direct service to children was the most valuable of guidance services.

When principals were asked the question, "Do you have any other comments to make?" they confirmed the value of elementary guidance programs. A typical response was "students at the elementary level have problems that need immediate help before their problems worsen" (Sattes & Miller, 1989, p. 43).

In 1990 Lehman completed a study of the elementary counseling program in Roanoke County for Virginia Polytechnic

Institute. Her goal was to determine the effectiveness of the program by collecting data from questionnaires and focus interviews. Lehman surveyed all 14 guidance counselors. One primary or one intermediate class of students was randomly selected and surveyed from each of the 14 elementary schools. Thirty-four randomly selected elementary faculty members and 16 principals of the elementary schools were surveyed. Some schools had already surveyed parents, so parents were randomly selected from the nine remaining schools. Response rate was recorded at 100% for students, 79% for faculty members, 77% for principals, and 43% from a random parent (n=200) sample. An additional mailing went to parents (n=80) yielding a 45% response rate. Questions focused on three main themes. Were program goals being met? Were student needs being met? What was the attitude toward the program?

Primary children (98%) indicated they felt better about themselves. Faculty members felt goals were being met (74%-97%). Principals also felt goals were being met (90%-100%).

In response to student needs, 93% of the students felt their counselor would take time to see them if needed. Principals and faculty members responded that although needs were being met, there were too few counselors to predict continued program effectiveness.

Parents answered questions about attitudes toward the program. parents felt knowledgeable and satisfied about the elementary counseling program.

The significant recommendations from this study were the need for more elementary guidance counseling, staff development, and a focus on peer and family relations. Also, Lehman recommended a comprehensive evaluation of the elementary guidance and counseling program every four to five years (Lehman, 1990).

In 1992, Dean conducted a study to determine the need for elementary counselors in Mississippi as indicated by students' opinions. Six hundred fifty-nine students were randomly selected from grades three through six. A 23-item survey, the "What I Need" survey, developed by the Mississippi State Department of Education was used. This survey required students to put a check by "I need help" if the statement applied. No mark would indicate they did not feel a need for help. The questions fell into four domains. In the questions indicating a need for personal counseling, 72% of the students checked "I need help." In the questions addressing social needs, 73% responded with "I need help." Eighty-nine percent expressed "I need help" in the area of academic guidance. The greatest need was for career guidance with 91% of the children checking "I need help." This study provided the students'

perception of their guidance and counseling needs (Dean, 1992).

Virginia Beach Elementary Guidance Program Evaluation

In July of 1993, a program evaluation was conducted in the Virginia Beach elementary schools to determine if the guidance program was effective and helpful as viewed by students, parents, faculty members, principals, and other community professionals. A team of nine, chaired by an evaluation specialist from Virginia Commonwealth University, met, designed questionnaires, and developed interview formats.

The comprehensive study included survey questionnaires, a review of elementary counselors' monthly activity reports, case studies and structured interviews. All elementary principals, all fifth-grade students, and all elementary guidance counselors completed surveys. Two hundred and sixty faculty members (one per grade level per school) and 400 randomly selected parents of fifth-grade students were also surveyed.

Structured interviews were conducted with all middle school guidance counselors. Additional interviews were conducted with five community agencies that apparently work closely with elementary counselors in helping students with problems.

Principals were given a 25-item questionnaire and were asked to respond and/or have an assistant principal complete the questionnaire. Responses were received from 100 individuals, an average of two per school. Eighty of the respondents specified their role; 38 were principals and 42 were assistant principals. Twenty administrators did not specify their role.

Responses can be grouped into areas of program value, counselor-pupil ratio, facilities, and program planning. Building administrators valued the program. When asked if contact with the counselor(s) has been beneficial to children, 100% responded yes. When asked if guidance counselors have offered appropriate parent groups, 97% responded affirmatively. When asked if in-services provided by counselors met the needs of the school, 94% indicated yes. In addressing counselor-pupil ratio, 33% of the principals and assistant principals felt the ratio did not allow counselors to meet the students' needs. Comments suggested that schools with large at-risk populations needed more counselors. Ten items asked about counseling facilities. According to administrators, 47% did not have a private office and 12% lacked a telephone. Most (95%) said the counseling offices were handicapped accessible. In the area of program planning, 65% of the administrators said they planned with counselors.

When asked about an annual plan, 79% said they did have one. When asked if the budget was adequate, 88% felt that it was fine.

A representative sample of the faculty was invited to participate. Principals were asked to choose one faculty member at each grade level in their school to complete the 22-item questionnaire. Responses were received from 276 faculty members, an average of 5.3 faculty members per school. Faculty responses can be grouped into areas of faculty member involvement, student needs and counselor-pupil ratio. When asked if faculty members favored classroom guidance, 94% responded yes. When asked if the counselor was available for parent conferences, 92% said yes. When asked if they had participated in in-service training provided by counselors, 64% checked yes. Questions about student needs also drew positive responses from faculty members. When asked if children benefited from contact with counselors, 94% said yes. Fewer (78%) noticed positive changes in students receiving counseling. Some (65%) felt the frequency of classroom guidance met student needs. When asked about the counselor-pupil ratio, 50% said that it was not adequate to meet student needs.

Fifth-grade faculty members were asked to administer the 11-item survey to all their students. The questions required

a yes or no response and 4,973 students completed the survey. When asked if their talk with the counselor was helpful, 81% responded yes. When asked, "Does your counselor provide classroom guidance activities," 93% said yes. When asked if being in a counseling group was helpful, 76% said yes. Students (79%) said they would go to a counselor if they had a problem. Fifth graders (90%) felt counselors were an important part of their school.

The parent survey was distributed to parents of 16 randomly selected fifth-grade classes. The students took the 14-item survey home to their parents and returned the completed questionnaire to their school. Of the 400 distributed, 301 were returned for a 75% response rate. Parent responses fell into two areas: the area of counselor-pupil ratio and the area of program endorsement. Of the respondents, 67% felt the 1:500 ratio was sufficient to meet the needs of all students. When asked, "Are you comfortable with the idea of your child seeing the elementary school counselor?" 96% of the parents responded yes. Parents, likewise, gave a strong endorsement to the elementary guidance program with a 90% affirmative response to the question, "Generally, do you feel that contact with the counselor(s) has been beneficial to the children at your child's school?" Equally impressive was the response from 42% of the parents

that they themselves had had contact with the counselor(s) at their child's school and that 82% of them had found those contacts to be beneficial. The parents also indicated that 56% of them had children who had met individually with the counselor and 45% had children who participated in small group counseling. From both individual and small group counseling, the parents cited that they had noticed positive changes in their children which they attributed to participation; 71% affirmed positive changes from individual counseling and 64% from small group counseling (Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 1993).

All of the elementary counselors were asked to respond to questions about positive student changes, referral response time, classroom guidance budget, facilities, counselor involvement, and characteristics affecting guidance programs. The counselors felt the program was having a positive impact on children. Responses ranged from 99% for individually counseled students to 90% for students receiving classroom guidance. More than half (53%) were dissatisfied with their response time for referrals. Counselors (96%) felt others valued classroom guidance.

Most counselors (86%) received supplemental funding from sources such as the PTA or the principal. The majority of counselors felt their facilities were adequate. Counselors

were involved in a variety of activities such as incentive programs (79%), student hosts (79%), peer tutors (60%), and conflict mediation (59%). The characteristics that counselors felt most pervasively influenced their programs were at-risk populations (74%), military dependents (69%) and the economic level of the community (67%).

The monthly activity report was collected for March 1993. The following chart shows the seven major areas of activities conducted by elementary school counselors.

**Compilation of Elementary Counselors'
Major Activities for March 1993**

GUIDANCE SERVICES	NUMBERS INVOLVED
Individual Counseling	11,991 Counseling Contracts 5,883 Individual Cases
Small Group Counseling	1,087 Groups 4,331 Students
Classroom Guidance	1,890 Classes 38,246 Students
Other Guidance Groups	160 Presentations 8,357 Students
Staff Development	13 Presentations 432 Participants
Consultation/Conferences with Administrators	
Faculty Members/Staff	1,541 Contacts
Parents	3,956 Contacts
Faculty Members & Parents	1,949 Contacts
Personnel at Other Schools	330 Contacts
Community Agencies and Other Referral Sources	453 Contacts
Parent Education Groups	104 Groups 1,027 Participants

The counselors were invited to submit case studies. The 65 case studies collected were reported in a separate book as a reference for counselors handling similar situations. The cases range from normal developmental needs of children to crises needs. They illustrated the problems, strategies used, and outcomes.

Interviews were conducted with 10 of 11 middle school guidance directors. All respondents that had contact with elementary guidance counselors felt they had been helpful. Middle school counselors felt that elementary counselors had been instrumental in defining the counselor-pupil relationship and encouraged self-referral. Middle school guidance directors felt that their parents were more receptive to assistance after having exposure to elementary counseling programs.

In interviews with community agency staff, elementary counselors are viewed as a major contact in the school. Staff members saw counselors at the elementary level as a major key to early intervention. The Virginia Beach program evaluation concluded with ten recommendations.

1. Consider employing additional counselors for at-risk populations.
2. Continue services to all children; focus on prevention.

3. Continue planning with principals to meet the needs of the population.
4. Continue all collaborative working relationships.
5. Continue transition to middle school initiatives.
6. Continue staff development.
7. Continue and expand parent education groups.
8. Free counselors from non-guidance activities.
9. Continue efforts for private well-equipped offices.
10. Continue training conferences and in-services for counselors.

Summary

The research helps to establish elementary guidance programs as an important, valued part of our elementary schools. These previous studies focus on important issues and the need for continuous program evaluation. A detailed description of the design of this study is presented in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This chapter contains a description of the school division and a description of the populations and samples. Also included is the development of the survey instruments, validity and reliability checks, scoring, definitions of the variables, and data collection procedures.

During the initial stages of this study, the evaluator met with the staff of the Virginia Beach Schools Department of Accountability and Technology and the Elementary School Guidance Counselor Advisory Committee. The evaluator presented the survey proposal to a general meeting of all elementary guidance counselors. The evaluator met twice with a sub-committee of elementary school principals. The primary purpose of these meetings was to gather information about existing counseling programs. Elementary school principals felt the need to justify program choices in view of the state's fluctuating position. Input was sought in the early stages of development from those who could best utilize the results.

Description of the School Division

Virginia Beach is located in a 310-square-mile southeastern corner of Virginia. The city is spread out with

no traditional city center. There are four military installations and three million tourists yearly that affect the economic atmosphere.

The school system is governed by an eleven-member school board. There have been five different superintendents in the last eight years. There are ten senior high schools, fourteen middle schools, and fifty-five elementary schools. There are approximately 37,000 elementary children, 19,000 middle school children, and 22,000 high school students. There are approximately 10,000 employees with an operating budget of approximately \$411 million.

The Virginia Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredit all schools. The School Renewal and School Improvement processes are used to assess schools as they set, reach and revise goals.

Description of the Samples and Populations

Several populations were surveyed in this study. One survey was directed to parents of elementary students served by Virginia Beach Public Schools. The total number of households is 37,400. Therefore, sample size of parent households chosen to be surveyed was 600 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). A random sample of households was chosen from the

student Columbia database, and mailing labels were provided by the school system's Data Processing Office.

A second survey instrument was designed for all elementary principals and assistant principals. All 113 building-level administrators were surveyed since they would have direct knowledge of the guidance programs.

The third survey was given to faculty members. This included specialists, special education faculty members, and kindergarten through fifth grade faculty members. The faculty population was approximately 4,000. The sample chosen was 400 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). A random sample of instructional personnel was selected from the Columbia database, and mailing labels were provided by the schools system's Data Processing Office.

A fourth survey was designed for all elementary guidance counselors in the Virginia Beach City Public School System. There are 84 elementary guidance counselors at this time. This is in keeping with the state regulation of one guidance counselor per 500 elementary students.

The fifth survey was designed for fifth-grade students in Virginia Beach City's Public Elementary Schools. The population was approximately 6,000. A single-stage cluster random sample of fifth-grade students was used. Approximately 875 fifth-grade students were involved in a total of 35

classes (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Fifth-graders were chosen as they have had the most opportunity to have contact with the counseling program.

Questions one and two on the survey instrument for each of the five populations were useful in determining the respondent's general exposure to elementary schools and guidance program (Tables 2 and 3). Roughly 65% of the parents responding to question one had children in the elementary schools from 0-5 years and 35% had children in elementary school for 6 or more years. The majority of those parents had not attended parent guidance workshops. The majority of the administrators responding had been assigned to their present school five or fewer years and did have guidance departments involved in faculty member workshops. The majority of faculty members responding was experienced and had attended workshops or in-services given by the guidance department. The majority

Table 2

Exposure to Elementary School

	No Response		0-2 Years		3-5 years		6-8 Years		9 or More	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Parents										
I have had a child attending a Virginia Beach Public Elementary School for...	11	3	131	33	121	30	79	20	57	14
Administrators										
I have been assigned to my present school for...	2	2	57	57	29	29	7	7	5	5
Faculty Members										
I have been a faculty member in a Virginia Beach Public Elementary School for...	8	3	36	12	54	18	54	18	146	49
Counselors										
I have been assigned to my present school for...	1	1	12	15	14	18	18	22	35	44
5th Grade Students										
I have attended this elementary school for...	45	12	119	32	119	32	89	24	N/A	N/A

NR - Not reported

Table 3

Exposure to Guidance Program

	No Response		No		Yes	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Parents						
I have attended parent workshops given by my child's elementary school guidance department	0	0.0	243	61	156	39
Administrators						
The guidance department at my school is involved in faculty member workshops and in-services.	5	5	8	8	87	87
Faculty Members						
I have attended workshops and in-services given by my schools guidance department.	0	0.0	69	23	229	77
5th Grade Students						
The guidance counselors have visited my class this year to give a guidance lesson.	53	14	7	2	312	84

of the counselors had been assigned to their present school for 6 or more years. These counselors were involved in a variety of activities (Table 4).

Counselors were also given three spaces on which to list other activities they may be involved in that were not already listed. Twelve counselors listed parent workshops or programs. Five listed parenting classes or groups. Five are involved in the Child Study Team. Activities that were mentioned four times each were manner classes, problem solving, SCA advisor, Guidance Advisory Committee, Joy Fund, and school-wide behavior programs. Character education, School Planning Council, student clubs, middle school registration, and tutor programs were mentioned three times each. Other activities listed were attendance program, newspaper sponsor, gifts for the needy, Odyssey of the Mind, Planning Council, School Renewal, crisis intervention, lost and found, test improvement, gifted program coordinator, honor assemblies, United Way, and Career Day. Many other activities provided academic support: test improvement, a study club, read to learn program, and test-taking groups. Counselors listed a total of sixty-three different additional activities. Further discussion of these activities can be found in

Table 4

Activities of Elementary Guidance Counselors

Activity	Counselors Affirming Participation			
	1993		1998	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Student Host	97	79	83	82
Peer Tutors	97	60	83	45
Raisin Up Club/Bug Roll	97	42	83	42
Student Recognition Programs	97	73	83	86
Multicultural/Black Culture	97	26	83	28
Community Outreach	97	68	83	64
Coordinate Volunteers to Work With Students	97	43	83	36
New Student Orientation	97	75	83	81
Faculty Member In-service	97	NR	83	65
Incentive programs	97	79	83	76
Mentoring (SOS)	97	28	83	29
Conflict Mediation	97	59	83	68
Walking/Wellness Activities	97	25	83	19
Drug Prevention Activities	97	67	83	38
PEP	97	11	83	10
PTA Presentations	97	72	83	53
Cooperative Discipline	97	26	83	31

NR - Not Reported

Chapter 4 (Report of Opinions of Counselors Regarding Conditions Affecting Their Work).

The majority of the students had attended their current elementary school for 3 or more years, and 84% responded that the counselor had visited in their classroom. Overall, the responding populations were knowledgeable enough to make judgements about the elementary guidance and counseling program.

Development of the Survey Instruments

This study collected opinions of stakeholders about the elementary guidance program in Virginia Beach. The surveys were designed for both quantitative and qualitative responses from all five populations.

A draft of each survey was redesigned from "yes," "no," and "I don't know" response format to a Likert-type response scale. The four-point scale gave respondents a choice of "strongly disagree," "disagree," "agree," and "strongly agree." This closed-ended questionnaire with ordered choices is suitable for attitude or opinion surveys (Price, 1992). Each survey instrument was expanded to include two open-ended questions. This allowed respondents the opportunity to write in their own words opinions of the elementary guidance counseling program.

The questions in each of the surveys covered four domains:

(1) How well elementary guidance programs develop home-school relationships.

(2) How well elementary guidance programs facilitate students' personal development.

(3) How well the elementary guidance program supports student academic growth.

(4) The perceived value of the program.

Each survey began with two questions about the respondents that helped in interpreting data. These questions asked about experience in schools and about contact with the program.

Several questions repeated those asked in the survey in Virginia Beach in 1993. By repeating some of the same questions, benchmarks could be established for the elementary guidance program in Virginia Beach.

Parent, administrator, and faculty member surveys contained the same questions by domain (Appendices G, H, and I). The counselor survey had questions in all domains (Appendix J). Several questions about delivery of service and support for the program were included in the counselor survey. These questions were then compared to the past survey and provided important data in program service and implementation.

Students were asked questions about all domains. They were also asked about accessibility of counselors and effectiveness of the counseling program (Appendix K). The student survey contained only questions that students may be able to answer. Some technical questions from the adult surveys about the program were not appropriate for fifth graders.

In January, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects reviewed the survey and made suggestions for revisions. The student survey was modified as suggested by the board. The modifications included the addition of a NA (not applicable) category and separate consent forms for parents and students (Appendix K). In February, the board approved the revised student survey.

All surveys were printed on colored 9½ x 11-inch paper. A single fold created a front cover with clip art and instructions. Inside were two questions about the respondent, an explanation of the marking codes, and the nineteen objective questions. On the back were the two open-ended subjective questions with large blank spaces, a thank you note, and a return address.

Establishment of Content Validity

The surveys were revised several times. On October 1, 1997, the core representatives of elementary guidance

counselors known as the Elementary Counselors Advisory Committee thoroughly reviewed and made the first extensive changes in all of the surveys. In November, the researcher met with a subcommittee of elementary principals. This committee's purpose was to gather data supporting their position to the Virginia Beach City School Board. Surveys were redrafted with their input.

In December, the Department of Accountability and Technology of the Virginia Beach City School System reviewed the surveys and had them examined by a several educational experts used to consult and review studies of the Virginia beach City Public Schools. The surveys and cover letters were sent to a panel of experts used by the Virginia Beach School System as a review panel. Revisions were made from suggestions.

The new drafts were then presented to a group of thirteen educational administrators who reviewed questions for understanding and classified questions according to domain. The surveys were then reformatted to allow item-by-item comparisons. Questions were grouped by domains for easier scoring.

Content validity was further tested by having the surveys examined by several experts in the field. Marcella Whitson, Coordinator of the Virginia Beach City Schools Guidance

Program and Dr. Debbie Dyer-Wahlstom of Successline, Inc., a private evaluation firm, examined the surveys for content validity. As a result, minor changes were made in the wording of three questions. The following table lists the most important sources used in developing validity (Table 5).

Establishment of Reliability

The survey was edited and given to a group of parents who attend the Adult Learning Center of the Virginia Beach Public School System. The parents were asked to circle anything they did not understand and to complete the questionnaire. Five classes were surveyed. Students were asked to write NP for "not a parent" on the cover of the survey. Surveys indicating NP were not used. Forty-three surveys were collected. Twenty-two were from parents, and those surveys were used to check reliability.

Table 5

Sources Used in Developing and Refining Survey

-
- Previous Surveys of Elementary Counseling Programs
 - Goals and Objectives of State and Local Counseling Programs
 - 1993 Survey of Virginia Beach Counseling Program
 - Elementary Counselors and the Elementary Counselor Advisory Committee of the Virginia Beach City Schools
 - Dr. Marcella Whitson, Director of Elementary Guidance and Counseling (Virginia Beach City Public Schools)
 - Parents of elementary children attending classes at the Adult Learning Center
 - Virginia Beach City Public Schools Elementary Principals Sub-Committee on Elementary Counseling
 - Virginia Polytechnic Institute Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects
 - Virginia Beach City Schools Department of Research and Accountability
 - Dr. Debbie Dyer-Wahlston of Successline, Inc.
 - Virginia Polytechnic Institute Tidewater Class of School Administrators
-

As a test of reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the four domains in the instruments. Item numbers three through twenty-two were included in the analysis of the twenty-two returned parent test surveys. An alpha level of .92 was found for these questions.

In the parent survey, for the domain of home-school relationships, the alpha level was .84. For the domain of personal development, the alpha level was .69. For the domain of academic support, the alpha level was .84. For the domain of total value of the program, the alpha level was .85. The parent sample showed a high degree of correlation for questions within three of the four domains.

After all surveys were collected, a factor analysis confirmed a high degree of correlation for questions in each domain. Seven hundred ninety-seven surveys were analyzed by domain. The domain of home-school relationships had six items for an alpha level of .87. The domain of facilitating student personal development had five items with an alpha level of .95. The domain of support for academic growth had four items for an alpha level of .92. The domain of program value had four items with an alpha level of .86.

Scoring

Survey responses were stamped with the return date. Each survey was numbered. Numbers were recorded on master lists for each population. Assigned numbers were checked off on master lists as they were returned.

The answers for the objective responses were assigned a numerical value. One represents strongly disagree, two represents disagree, three represents agree, and four means strongly agree. Students had a fifth category of not applicable. A nine value was coded for unanswered questions.

These numerically converted responses were listed on graph paper by the date and respondent's number.

Dependent and Independent Variables

The dependent variable in this study is the perceptions about the Elementary School Guidance and Counseling Program in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. The independent variable is the status of the stakeholders. The levels of the independent variable are administrators, faculty members, parents, guidance counselors, and students who responded to the survey.

Data Collection, Response Pattern, Follow-up Mailings

Parent surveys were mailed on January 19, 1998. About 155 of 600 parents had responded by February 6. Fifteen

surveys were returned undeliverable. On February 16, a second survey was sent to approximately 400 non-respondents. A stronger letter asking for a response was included (Appendix L). By March 15, 150 more parent surveys were returned. By April 1, about 90 more were received for a total return rate of 66% (Table 6).

All administrator surveys were sent on January 19, 1998. Eighty-seven administrators had responded by February 4, 1998. A second survey was sent to non-respondents. This included a personal note. Fourteen more administrators sent surveys back by March 1. The return rate for administrators was 88%.

Faculty member surveys were sent on January 22, 1998, with a note to return the survey by February 13, 1998. This group was sent out at a later date due to a back up in data processing. The random sample of faculty members was not available until January 22. However, faculty members responded promptly, and a second mailing was not required (return rate of 75%).

Table 6

Summary of Questionnaire Returns

	Population	Sample		Respondents	
		<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Parent Households	37,400	600	1.6	399	66.4
Administrators	113	113	100.0	100	88.4
Faculty Members	4,000	400	10.0	298	74.5
Counselors	83	83	100.0	80	96.0
5 th Grade Students	6,000	875	14.6	372	43.0

Student surveys were sent to faculty members on February 16, 1998, due to changes created for the Institutional Review Board. Teachers were asked to distribute surveys to students, collect them, and return packets of surveys by March 3, 1998. By March 9 twenty-three of thirty-five classes had returned surveys. A call was made to faculty members not returning any surveys, and by March 15, ten more classes sent surveys back. Responses per class varied widely. Some teachers sent as few as four. Others returned as many as twenty-three. Seventeen surveys were not used, as they did not have signed consent forms. The return rate for fifth grade students was 43%.

Scores coded onto graph paper from surveys were then transcribed into Microsoft Word 6.0 document format. The document scores were imported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Frequency and response percentages were analyzed for each response group's questions. Means and standard deviation by item and domain were calculated.

Four separate analyses of variances were conducted to determine the differences across the parent, faculty member, and administrator groups for composite domain scores. An alpha level of .05 was used. Student access to counselors was compared in a separate analysis. Questions asked only of counselors were examined separately. Open-ended questions were recorded by case number as they were returned and

analyzed according to emerging themes. They were used to validate opinions gathered by objective data.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The results of the data analysis are presented in this chapter. The data are presented first in tables of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations by items; then group opinions are compared by domain using analysis of variance and Scheffé's post-hoc comparisons. Two supplemental analyses follow: student access to counselors and opinions of counselors regarding conditions affecting their work. These analyses were included because counselor groups wanted to know if collateral duties were taking their time away from actual counseling of students and if the facilities had been modified to accommodate their activities. These were major concerns and recommendations for improvement were contained in the 1993 survey. Counselors wanted to know if these working conditions had improved. The chapter ends with an analysis of the responses to open-ended questions about program effectiveness and general comments about the program.

Analysis of Data Related to Research Questions

The focus is to reveal differences in opinion about the program among the adult groups. Students and counselors responses are included in the descriptive status but not in

the analysis of variance. Some domains for students and counselors contained non-parallel questions.

Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations of Question Items by Domains for Groups

The four domains are reported in frequency tables with percentages. Means and standard deviations are presented in four domains by item and domain composite.

Home-School Relationships

Is promoting home-school relationships a worthwhile goal? Over 89% of respondents agreed that promoting home-school relationships was a worthwhile goal of the guidance and counseling program. Does the program promote closer home-school relationships? Administrators, faculty, and counselors were slightly more positive than parents about the program promoting closer home-school relationships, parents feeling positive about the program, appropriate parent groups being offered, and information being sent to parents (Tables 7 through 11, Appendix M). Roughly 87% of parents agreed about the program promoting closer home-school relationships. About 88% of parent respondents agreed that parents felt positive about the program and 86% felt parent groups offered were appropriate. Nineteen percent of parents reported that they had not been sent information about the program. Although positive, the mean score for parents for each question in this

domain is lower than in all other groups (Table 27). Students also gave their lowest scores in this domain (Table 28)

Student Personal Development

Questions in the second domain ask if facilitating student personal development is a worthwhile goal of the guidance program. The adult respondents generally agreed that student personal development was an important goal of the guidance program (Tables 12 through 16, Appendix M). Other questions in this domain asked if elementary counseling had a positive impact on students, helped them cope with change, and helped them understand themselves and others better.

Administrators, faculty, and counselors were more positive than parents and students on all of these items (Tables 12 through 16, Appendix M). Eight to 83% of parents felt that the program had a positive impact, helped students cope with change, and understand themselves and others better (Table 12). Seventy-seven percent of the students felt guidance helped them understand change. Students felt counselors helped them understand themselves (80%) and others (85%) better (Table 16). Some parents and students felt that the

Table 27

Means and Standard Deviations of Parents, Administrators, Faculty Member's, and Counselors by Question Domain and Composite

Questions by Domains	Parents			Administrators			Faculty			Guidance Counselors		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Home-School Relations												
7 Goal Important	383	3.35	0.63	100	3.67	0.53	298	3.65	0.77	80	3.79	0.41
8 Promotes Home-School Relationships	373	3.03	0.64	99	3.57	0.52	298	3.47	1.05	80	3.63	0.49
9 Parents Positive	372	3.09	0.67	99	3.44	0.50	298	3.79	1.68	79	3.43	0.50
10 Parent Groups Approp.	366	2.95	0.61	94	3.36	0.58	298	3.92	1.87	79	3.42	0.57
11 Parents Sent Info.	381	2.90	0.71	94	3.53	0.50	298	3.71	1.31	80	3.73	0.48
12 Available for Parent Conference	375	3.18	0.56	100	3.65	0.48	298	3.61	0.91	80	3.84	0.37
Domain Composite	383	3.08	0.47	100	3.45	0.49	298	3.42	0.43	80	3.64	0.33
Student Personal Development												
13 Goal Important	375	3.27	0.62	100	3.49	0.52	298	3.65	0.91	80	3.81	0.39
14 Positive Impact	365	3.13	0.65	99	3.48	0.50	298	3.57	0.85	*NA	NA	NA
15 Helps Students Cope	364	3.10	0.61	100	3.38	0.55	298	3.51	0.88	79	3.71	0.46
16 Helps Students Understand Self	367	3.07	0.60	99	3.33	0.52	298	3.52	0.87	80	3.71	0.46
17 Helps Students Understand Others	367	3.06	0.57	100	3.41	0.51	298	3.54	0.85	NA	NA	NA
Domain Composite	367	3.18	0.70	100	3.40	0.47	298	3.70	0.79	79	3.75	0.35
Support for Academic Growth												
18 Program Supports Academic Growth	370	3.09	0.60	100	3.49	0.50	298	3.44	0.83	80	3.76	0.43
19 Helps With Study Skills	357	2.92	0.67	100	3.39	0.58	298	3.48	1.18	80	3.74	0.44
20 Helps With Test Taking Skills	353	2.82	0.66	98	3.30	0.68	298	3.46	1.45	77	3.58	0.55
21 Helps With Academic Attitude	364	3.03	0.57	100	3.41	0.51	298	3.46	0.98	79	3.76	0.46
Domain Composite	367	2.96	0.56	100	3.39	0.47	298	3.29	0.56	80	3.71	0.40
Program Value												
4 Important Part of School	386	3.29	0.66	100	3.75	0.44	298	3.73	0.78	80	3.61	0.54
5 Helpful to Me	375	3.07	0.70	100	3.74	0.44	298	3.55	0.97	80	NA	NA
6 Students Should Use Program	386	3.36	0.58	100	3.76	0.43	298	3.77	0.92	NA	NA	NA
22 Benefits Worth Cost	375	3.33	0.70	99	3.76	0.43	298	3.79	0.90	NA	NA	NA
Domain Composite	387	3.26	0.52	100	3.75	0.32	298	3.63	0.50	80	NA	NA

*NA = Question not asked of this group.

Note: The scale was 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

Table 28

The Mean and Standard Deviation of Students by Opinion Domain and Question Item

Questions by Domains	Students		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Home-School Relations			
7 Talked to Parents	298	2.74	0.94
8 Met With Parents	305	2.71	0.91
Domain Composite	292	2.72	0.88
Student Personal Development			
9 Better Understanding of Changes	339	3.15	0.76
10 Better Understanding of Self	349	3.15	0.75
11 Better Understanding of Others	353	3.17	0.67
Domain Composite	331	3.17	0.63
Support for Academic Growth			
12 Better Student	358	3.15	0.76
13 Study Skills	338	2.09	0.84
14 Test Taking Skills	333	2.86	0.89
15 Attitude Toward Work	342	3.15	0.82
Domain Composite	320	3.02	0.71
Program Value			
4 Important to School	367	3.50	0.60
5 Helpful to Me	347	3.36	0.65
6 Good to Use Guidance Counselors	359	3.46	0.69
Domain Composite	337	3.45	0.47

Note: The scale was 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

elementary counseling program did not help students cope with change or understand themselves or others better. The mean parent and student scores (Table 28) for this domain composite were closer than all other groups and domains. The composite standard deviation for parents in this domain was the highest of the groups and domains.

Support for Academic Growth

Questions in this domain asked if the program supported academic growth and test-taking skills and helped students with their attitude toward academics. Although all populations felt counseling did support academic growth, mean scores for this domain were lowest of all domains for parents, for administrators, and for faculty (Table 27). Over 80% of the parents felt counseling helped students with study skills and nearly 20% did not think so. Over 75% of the parents felt counseling helped students with test-taking skills, and nearly 24% felt counseling didn't help students in this area (Table 17, Appendix M). Eighty-eight percent of administrators and 85% of the faculty also felt counseling programs provided support for student's test-taking skills (Tables 18 and 19, Appendix M). The mean domain composite score for parents in the domain of support for academic growth was lowest of all domains and lowest of all groups (Table 27). Students (82%) felt counselors helped them become a better student and helped

with their attitude toward their school work (75%). Fewer students felt counselors helped with study skills (67%) and test taking skills (60%) (Table 21).

Program Value

The question of overall program value is examined in the fourth domain. Nearly 90% of the parents felt the counseling program was an important part of the school program, and over 90% of the parents felt their children should talk to a counselor (Table 22, Appendix M). Administrators were extremely positive about the value of the program (Table 23, Appendix M). Across four items related to the value of the program, 100% of the administrators either agreed or strongly agreed. For the fourth item, 99% of the administrators agreed or strongly agreed. Parents gave positive scores ranging from 80% to 93% on program value. Students also gave positive responses to the value of the counseling program. Their scores ranged from 87% to 95% either in agreement or strong agreement for items about the value of the program. Although overall most respondents valued the program, a few teachers and students responded negatively (Tables 24-26, Appendix M). The mean composite scores in this domain were the highest of all domains for parents and administrators (Table 27). Students were asked if the guidance program has been very helpful and if it is good to talk to counselors about school-

related problems. Students felt the program to be valuable; mean scores were higher here than in any other category for students (Table 28).

**Comparison of Opinions about the Counseling Program
by Domains Across Groups**

In comparing the opinions of parents, administrators, and faculty, the researcher conducted four analyses of variance. An analysis of variance was conducted for each of the domains: home-school relationships, student personal development, support for academic growth, and program value. The analyses answer the following four research questions.

Are there significant differences among groups surveyed (parents, administrators, faculty members) with respect to their perception of the elementary guidance program in developing home-school relationships?

Are there significant differences among groups with respect to their perception of guidance programs in facilitating student personal development?

Are there significant differences among groups with respect to their perception of guidance programs in supporting student academic growth?

Are there significant differences among groups with respect to their perception of the value of the elementary guidance program in Virginia Beach (Table 29)?

Whenever a significant F was found, Scheffé's test for post-hoc comparisons with an alpha level of .05 was used to determine which groups differed in opinion about each domain (Table 29).

There was a significant difference between parents and administrators and between parents and faculty members with respect to their perceptions in all four domains. There was no significant difference between the perception of administrators and faculty members in any domain (Table 29).

Supplemental Analyses

Counseling groups wanted to know about student access and about conditions affecting their work. The survey contained several questions for counselors that were asked in the 1993 survey.

Table 29

Analysis of Variance Data for Differences between Faculty Members, Parents, and Administrators on Opinion Category

Groups by domain	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	f	p
Home-School Relationship					
Between Groups	2	26.029	13.015	65.358	.0005
Within Groups	774	154.125	.199		
Total	776	180.154			
Facilitating Students Personal Development					
Between Groups	2	47.175	23.587	42.385	.0005
Within Groups	757	421.273	.557		
Total	759	468.448			
Support for Academic Growth					
Between Groups	2	24.820	12.410	40.347	.0005
Within Groups	758	233.147	.308		
Total	760	257.967			
Value of Program					
Between Groups	2	31.696	15.848	64.984	.0005
Within Groups	757	184.615	.244		
Total	759	216.311			

Table 29 (Continued)

Analysis of Variance Data for Differences between Faculty Members, Parents, and Administrators on Opinion Category

Scheffé Post-hoc Results for Home/School Relationships				
Group	Means	Parent	Administrator	Faculty Member
Parent	3.08	--	.000 (.050)	.000 (.035)
Administrator	3.45	--	--	.080 (.025)
Faculty Member	3.42	--	--	--

Scheffé Post-Hoc Results for Facilitating Student Personal Development				
Group	Mean	Parent	Administrator	Faculty Member
Parent	3.18	--	.000 (.084)	.000 (.058)
Administrator	3.40	--	--	.244 (.086)
Faculty Member	3.70	--	--	--

Scheffé Post-Hoc Results for Support for Academic Growth				
Group	Mean	Parent	Administrator	Faculty Member
Parent	2.96	--	.000 (.063)	.000 (.043)
Administrator	3.39	--	--	.299 (.064)
Faculty Member	3.29	--	--	--

Scheffé Post-Hoc Results for Value of Program				
Group	Mean	Parent	Administrator	Faculty Member
Parent	3.26	--	.000 (.056)	.000 (.039)
Administrator	3.75	--	--	.092 (.057)
Faculty Member	3.63	--	--	--

Standard of error for these comparisons is in parentheses.

Student Access to Counselors

Adult populations were asked if they felt the ratio of one counselor to 500 elementary students permitted counselors to meet the needs of students. More parents, teachers, and counselors than administrators felt there were too many students for each counselor. Fifty to sixty percent of the parents, faculty, and counselors felt that the ratio was too high. Only 36% of the administrators felt the ratio was too high. However, 92% of the fifth-grade students were able to see a counselor when they needed to see one (Table 30).

Report of Opinions of Counselors Regarding Conditions Affecting Their Work

Counselors were asked several questions from the 1993 survey. Question number two asked counselors to mark all activities in which they are involved (Table 4). Of the seventeen activities listed in the question, participation by counselors rose in seven areas and declined in eight areas. One of the areas measured was not reported in the 1993 results, and in one area participation remained at the same percentage. Counselors continue to be involved in a variety of supportive activities. More than a 15% decline in

Table 30

Student Access to Counselors

Question	Response Group	No Answer		1 Strongly disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly agree		Not applicable		M	SD
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
The ratio of counselors to students is appropriate	Parents	18	4.5	79	19.8	131	32.8	138	34.6	33	8.3	NA	NA	2.33	.90
	Administrators	2	2.0	9	9.0	27	27.0	50	50.0	12	12.0	NA	NA	2.66	.81
	Faculty members	7	2.3	41	13.8	107	35.9	119	39.9	24	8.1	NA	NA	2.59	.78
	Counselors	0	0.0	18	22.5	28	35.0	32	40.0	2	2.5	NA	NA	2.23	.83
I am able to see the counselor when I need to	Students	0	0.0	3	0.8	8	2.2	169	45.4	173	46.5	19	5.1	3.53	.67

participation was found in the areas of drug prevention activities and PTA presentations. Participation in student recognition programs (up 13%) and conflict mediation (up 9%) rose.

Question fourteen asked counselors if the facilities are adequate. Seventy-nine percent (67) believed counselor facilities were adequate. In 1993, 78% (76) of the respondents felt the facilities were adequate for small group counseling, and 92% (89) felt that the facilities were adequate for individual counseling and adult conferences.

Question seventeen asked counselors if they were able to provide classroom guidance frequently enough to meet the needs of students. Eighty-five percent (68) agreed with that statement. In the 1993 survey, 79% (77) felt that the frequency of classroom guidance met student needs.

Question number twenty-two for counselors asked if their collateral duties did not interfere with delivery of service. Seventy-four percent (61) agreed that collateral duties did not interfere with delivery of service. In the 1993 survey, 73% (71) of the counselors felt that collateral duties did not interfere with their ability to deliver services.

Counselors were asked if the guidance program is supported by the staff. One hundred percent (83) of the counselors agreed that the staff supported their program. In

the 1993 survey, 96% (93) of the counselors felt their program was supported and valued by teachers and administrators. Generally, responding counselors continued to be involved in a variety of activities and did not feel that collateral duties interfere with delivery of service. Counselors also felt that facilities were adequate, and the staff supported them.

Analysis of Suggestions about Improved Program Effectiveness and Additional Comments

Each survey contained two subjective questions. All adult populations were asked to:

Tell how you think the elementary guidance program could be more effective.

- Please make any additional comments that you would like to share about the elementary guidance program in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

Students were asked to:

Tell other ways the guidance counselor could help you.

- Please write anything you would like to share about counseling.

Responses from each group (parents, administrators, faculty, counselors and students) were analyzed by emerging themes.

Improved Program Effectiveness

Suggestions fell into six major themes. Four of the major themes had sub-themes.

More Counselors

The theme of more counselors received more responses from the adult participants than any other theme (Table 31). Nearly 300 adults made comments related to the number of elementary counselors. Over 100 of these responses were associated with the student-counselor ratio. Parent's typical responses were "The elementary guidance program could be more effective if the counselor/student ratio was smaller. There are so many social, developmental, and economic issues that children are forced to deal with today at much too young of an age. All children need more support available to them on a constant basis." "As our students come to school with more and more needs being met at school, we need more guidance counselors to support them." "We need more of these wonderful people."

Administrators felt that not only should the ratio be improved, several suggested a 1 to 300 or 1 to 400 ratio or

Table 31

Number of Responses to how the Guidance Program Could Be More Effective by Theme

Theme	Parent	Administrator	Faculty	Counselor	Student	Total
More Counselors	54		33			87
a. More counselors/better ratio.	25	42	23	12		102
b. Better ratio.	20			36		56
c. Listed reasons for more counselors.	14					17
d. Suggested specific ratio.		7				7
e. Improve ratio at higher risk schools.		8	4			12
f. Don't share counselors among schools.		6	8			14
More Communication with Parents	46	12	8			76
a. Haven't heard/Children too young. Send information.	32					32
b. Know a little/need to know more.	28					28
c. Can't judge program. Send more information.	59					59
Other Specific Suggestions for Improvement						
a. More time for counselors. Fewer collateral duties.			14	17		31
b. More training for counselors.				6		6
c. Specific allocated budget for programs.				14		14
d. Address specific student needs.			8			8
e. Improve classroom lessons.			11			11
f. Help more special needs students.			8			8
g. More follow-up with students/not there when needed.			16			16
Student Suggestions						
a. Help me get along with others.					33	33
b. Help me with problems in general.					16	16
c. Help me with family problems.					18	18
d. Help me with homework/school work.					9	9
e. Help me deal with death.					5	5
f. Help me with self-confidence/self-esteem.					9	9
g. Help me with studying/getting better grades.					7	7
h. Help me with a happy attitude.					8	8
i. Give me tips about life and moral values.					8	8
Keep program as it is			9			9
Don't need the program			5			5

focusing staff on "at risk" populations. Administrators and faculty felt part-time staff was not effective. Typical comments were, "The guidance program would be more effective if the allocation was based on need (ex., % of free/reduced lunch students). The more 'at risk' the population, the more need for guidance support." "By increasing the number of counselors in each school, we would only improve an already excellent program." "More counselors. A one-day or part-time counselor has difficulty meeting the needs of children every day."

Teachers also made comments explaining their reasoning. Typical comments were, "The number of students should be lowered so the children in my class could be better serviced." "Our counselors are wonderful, but they simply have too many students and families to deal with." "I feel that the 1 to 500 ratio is too high. In our school we have a great need for more guidance programs because of the socio-economic background of our students and the types of problems our children have at home." "One counselor should not be shared between two schools." "Part time counselors are not there when needed--not effective."

Counselors want the counselor-pupil ratio to change. Counselors felt those who did not spend their entire time at one school were far less effective. A typical response was,

"Counselor-student ratio needs to be much lower, especially at at-risk schools." "Counselors at a school for only one day a week are totally wasted."

More Communication with Parents

Another suggestion for improvement in elementary counseling programs by the adult populations was the need for more communication with parents (Table 31). Parents particularly felt strongly about the need for more communication. One hundred and sixty-five parents wanted to know more.

Some parents admitted to knowing the program was in place and relatively effective, but many were unclear about the goals. These comments about the need for communication fell into three sub-themes.

The dominant theme for parents was "can not judge the program." Parents responded to both discussion questions by saying that they didn't know enough about the program to judge effectiveness. "I haven't had the need to attend or the time . . . numerous people, I'm sure, have benefited." Another typical comment was, "We have a first grader, and this is our first experience with Virginia Beach Public Schools--so we are unable to evaluate all of your questions." "It is very difficult to assess the guidance program--my husband and I

work full time and are not in the school often enough to make a fair evaluation."

Building-level administrators also suggested that counselors communicate more closely with parents. Administrators said, "Reach out to the community and offer workshops at community centers, if possible (neutral grounds)." "There is a definite need for guidance programs to provide training in parenting skills."

Teachers made suggestions for program effectiveness regarding communication. Of these eight, typical comments were "Better liaison with homes and families of underachieving students." "More parent workshops during the day and evening." "If guidance counselors could send home a short note to parents explaining the lesson, parents would be more aware of the role counselors play in the classroom."

Other Specific Suggestions for Improvement

Counselors and teachers made other more specific suggestions about how the elementary guidance program could be more effective (Table 31).

Counselors and faculty members made statements such as "Guidance counselors should not be assigned non-essential duties within their building." Counselors desiring training made comments like this: "Use meetings for in-service training." Others made reference to a need for a program

budget: "A yearly budget to update resources would be helpful." Faculty members made specific suggestions for the program: "Establish programs that directly relate to the student's area of need based on socio-economic, gender, and ethnicity needs." "Improve classroom lessons by focusing on student needs--like problem-solving situations." "Do more with special ed. kids." "Counselors need to monitor students more closely after counseling has ended."

Student Suggestions

Student responses fell into nine main ways counselors could help them. Thirty-three students said counselors could help them get along with others. A typical response was, "Guidance can make friendships better and relationships better." Students mentioned other problems. They said counselors could do the following: "Make you feel better when someone or something has died." "She or he could help you with problems you may have." "They could help me with family problems." "The counselor can help you have confidence." "The counselor helps me organize my homework." "Counseling helps me to stay happy." "Ms. _____ gives us good tips for life."

Keep Program as It Is

Nine teachers suggested that the program be kept as it is. A typical response was, "Fine as is--want it to be continued at its current level."

Additional Comments

Additional comments fell into four main themes. All groups had good things to say about elementary counseling (Table 32).

Program Is Positive

Members of all responding groups had positive comments about the counseling program. Parents made comments such as: "I feel that it is a wonderful program." "Keep it. Today's kids need it." "The guidance program is essential and should not be done away with." Administrators made comments like this: "It is an extremely important part of the elementary program." Faculty members made statements like: "It is an excellent and much needed program." Counselors wrote comments like: "We are an important member of the educational team."

Table 32

The Number of Responses to Additional Comments by Theme

Theme	Parent	Administrator	Faculty	Counselor	Student	Total
Program is Positive						
a. It is good to have.	13	7	16	35		71
b. It is important.	7	4	12	7		30
c. It is good to have and makes you understand.					18	18
d. It is well supported.				5		5
e. It is vital and necessary.	9	12	21		22	64
f. It is successful.	12			4		16
Program is Helpful						
a. It is helpful to me.	13	2	23		20	58
b. It helps teachers with troubled students.		6				6
c. It connects with parents.		7	12			19
d. It helps you with intervention before discipline.		9	17			26
e. It helps with special problems.	4		3	2		9
Counselors Good						
a. Counselors are doing a great job.	27	8	12			47
b. Individual counselors (named) are good.	10		7		30	47
c. Our school's counselors are great.	9	3	4			16
Don't Need It	15					15

Typical student comments were: "My school's guidance counselor helps a lot of people every day. Without her, who would people like me talk to?" "It is good for new students."

Program is Helpful

Many comments from each of the responding groups expressed the feeling that the program was helpful. Parents said: "Keep it up! I had a chance to take a parent class, and it helped me so much." "They have been very helpful with my child's learning disability. He has improved immensely in the last few weeks." Administrators made comments about how helpful counselors have been: "As building principal, their role (the counselors) in assisting me is immeasurably significant." "The counselor is helpful in keeping small problems from becoming larger." Faculty members were also grateful for the help of guidance: "Teachers cannot be expected to teach today's children without the assistance from counselors." "The counselors have come into my classroom and taught my students positive behaviors." Students said: "It is easy to understand." "It has taught me how to get along with others."

Counselors Are Good

Some members of all groups affirmed the positive influence of the counselor. One parent said, "She truly cares and loves every student as if they were her own. We are very

lucky at (School) Elementary!" One administrator said, "She goes out of her way to make children feel good about themselves." Faculty members were equally complimentary. One teacher said, "I think the counselor is a super teacher." A typical student response was, "Ms. _____ is the greatest. She helps us understand each other."

Don't Need the Program

Only a few parents (15 of 399) wrote that counseling at the elementary level was unnecessary (Table 30). Five teachers felt negatively about the presence of an elementary guidance program. An example was, "Counselors at schools provide extra services to some students, but are they necessary--no." Fifteen parents felt we did not need the program. Typical responses of this group were, ". . . money for guidance should be concentrated on hiring more teachers and minimizing classroom sizes." "I do not see the need for this program at an early educational level."

Summary and Comparison of Suggestions of Groups

Improved Program Effectiveness

When asked to explain how the elementary guidance program could be more effective, some respondents in all adult groups indicated the need for more counselors. For administrators, faculty members, and counselors, this was the most frequently

mentioned suggestion. For parents, it was the third most frequently mentioned suggestion. The largest number of parent responses asked for more communication about the program. In comparison, administrators' second most frequently mentioned area to improve program effectiveness was to work more closely with parents. In faculty members, this was one of six ways the program could be more effective. In addition, the second most frequently made comment by parents indicated that they did not know enough about the program to respond. Faculty members supplied three main categories of suggestions for program improvement. These areas were (1) more counselors/better ratio, (2) improved follow-up in counseling students, and (3) more time spent on actual counseling as opposed to collateral duties. Counselors, secondary to improving the counselor-to-pupil ratio, felt they could be more effective by having fewer extra duties. Students were asked to tell other ways their school guidance counselor could help them. Roughly one third of those making comments said they needed help getting along with others. Students also mentioned they needed help with family problems, problems in general, self-confidence, and school work. These were other ways counselors could help them.

Additional Comments

When asked to make any other comments about the program, more than half of the parents responded with positive comments about the program. Roughly one third of the administrators responded that the program was valuable. Faculty members' comments were mostly about how vital and helpful the program was to them. Nine faculty members said keep the program as it is, and five faculty members made negative comments about the program. Fifteen parents made critical remarks. Counselors felt the program was vital and necessary to the school. Counselors also felt they helped faculty members with troubled students and that the program was well supported. When students were asked to share anything they would like to say about counseling, they said that their counselor was good and that counseling was necessary, helpful, and good. Overall comments pointed to a perception that there are not enough counselors to provide enough communication to parents. The current counseling program is viewed as being supportive to parents, faculty members, administrators, and students.

There were nearly 450 positive subjective comments made in response to the program. Subjective responses supported the objective findings and helped to clarify stakeholder opinions about the elementary guidance counseling program.

Chapter Five is a discussion of the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a review of the primary and secondary conclusions. Primary conclusions relate directly to the research questions. Secondary conclusions emerged from the results of the study. These are followed by a discussion of these conclusions, a list of limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Primary Conclusions

Overall results point to the positive perceptions that all populations hold for the elementary guidance and counseling program.

Although positive, there were significant differences in the degree of the positive perception of the groups. Overall, parents and students felt less positive about the program than administrators, faculty, and counselors.

The domains receiving the lowest ratings were support for academic growth and home-school relationships. Although positive, parents, administrators, and faculty felt support for academic growth was a relative weakness in the program. Counselors and students rated home-school relationships lowest of the domains.

Secondary Conclusions

- Parent responses, although positive, were lower than any other adult group in all domains.
- Although students felt that they had no problem getting to see a counselor, and administrators were comfortable with the ratio of counselors to students, a majority of parents, faculty, and counselors would like to see the ratio reduced.
- Parents, administrators, and students gave their highest ratings to counseling as an important part of the school program, to the benefits provided by counselors to students, and to the benefits received for the costs of the program. Faculty and counselors felt the program was most effective at supporting students' personal development.

Discussion

Below is a discussion of the primary conclusions. This is followed by a discussion of the secondary conclusions.

Discussion of Primary Conclusions

Overall Positive Perceptions

The general positive responses of the stakeholders in this survey are consistent with similar studies. As in the Boser study (1985), elementary counseling is perceived as effective and a valued part of the elementary school program. Many participants wrote comments reflecting their positive attitude toward the program. Student perceptions, both in this study and in the Boser study, affirm the presence of an elementary guidance counselor as someone they (students) can turn to for help. Administrators, in the Boser study, in the 1993 Virginia Beach study, and in the present study gave very high ratings to the value of elementary counseling. Of all groups, principals rated program value the highest. When asked if the program was helpful to them, 100% of the responding administrators in this survey said they agreed or strongly agreed.

These findings are certainly consistent with other guidance studies. This study indicates that elementary counseling is seen as a positive support to children in the Virginia Beach community and affirms the need for direct service to children established in the Sattes and Miller (1989) study. Principals in that study affirmed that the most

valuable component of an effective elementary counseling program was the direct services provided to children.

Significant Differences

Brown (1977), in discussing program evaluation, indicates that good program evaluation should involve all stakeholders. By surveying the five groups in this study, differences in opinions emerged. Why do parents and students feel less positive about the elementary counseling program than administrators, faculty, and counselors? One explanation may lie in the research of Price (1992) on public opinion. Price asks:

- *Does the public have access to the facts relevant to decision making?* In the case of this study, one can be sure parents did not have the "facts" to answer question number twenty-two. (Question 22 asked if the benefits are worth the cost.) It is difficult to determine what other knowledge about program goals was available to parents or students. Because this survey was developed from program goals, parents and students would be least familiar with the facts.
- *Does the public have enough information to make a judgment?* In this case parents affirmed that they did not know enough about the program. Fifteen percent of

the parent respondents stated they did not have the knowledge to answer the survey. Many parents asked for more information. As many as 19.4% of the students marked "not applicable" or left questions unanswered.

- *Did the populations understand the terminology?* Student personal development and developmental changes may have many different interpretations for parents. Educators would be most familiar with these terms.

Another possible explanation of the differences in the perception of groups (parents and students as compared to administrators, faculty, and counselors) may lie in further examination of the two less positively viewed domains: home-school relationships and support for academic growth.

Home-School Relationships

Although positive, this was viewed as the second weakest domain by the parents and faculty. Nearly one fifth of parents responding felt they had not been sent information, and many wanted to know more about the program. One third of the students disagreed about their parents and counselors meeting or talking. Although positive, counselors rated home-school relationships as their weakest area. Comments of all adult groups generally supported the need for improved home-school relationships involving specifically more communication.

There is a need for improved home-school relationships. This is particularly evident in the parents' generally lower opinions of the program in meeting the goals. Parents, administrators, and counselors felt least positive about the appropriate parent groups being offered. This is consistent with a recommendation from the 1993 survey concluding that "Counselors should continue and, in some cases, expand parent education groups."

The Virginia State goals of a collaborative effort among counselors, parents, faculty members, and administrators groups and the local goals of promoting closer home-school relationships are certainly considered appropriate by the adult stakeholders in this study (Appendix E).

Support for Academic Growth

The first and seventh Virginia State goals list academic skills and study skills as guidance goals. In Virginia Beach the eleventh goal is to "Foster positive attitudes toward learning and the development of effective study skills." Counseling programs have room to improve their support of the academic program by refocusing on study skills and test-taking skills for students. Although ratings for elementary guidance programs were very positive in academic growth, the following outcomes of this study warranted further examination by program administrators:

- Support for academic growth was given the lowest effectiveness rating by parents, administrators, and faculty.
- One fifth of the parents perceived that guidance did not help with study skills.
- Over one fifth of parents felt that guidance did not help students with test-taking skills.
- One tenth of the faculty felt that counseling had not helped students with study skills.
- A little less than one fifth of the faculty reported that guidance did not help students with test-taking.
- Over one fourth of the students felt guidance had not helped with test-taking skills.
- Nearly one fourth of the students felt that counselors had not helped them with their study skills.

These findings suggest that program planners in Virginia Beach may want to examine the programs and goals related to home-school relationships and support for academic growth. These results may help counselors identify areas that parents and students feel may need more of the counselors attention. This does not necessarily indicate that counselors are not doing enough in these domains. It may mean that counselors

should explore ways to keep parents well informed and give parents a better understanding about their services.

Discussion of Secondary Findings

Parent Scores

Why were parent scores lower in every domain? The previous discussion may have helped to explain this finding. A look at past research shows that parents are supportive of guidance programs, but educators are generally more positive about these programs than parents. More research is needed to understand the difference.

Access

The question of access continues to be an issue. A recommendation from the 1993 Virginia Beach study was to consider employing additional counselors for at risk-schools. This suggestion emerged from principals in this study. Although principals (66%) reported that the current ratio was appropriate, more than half made suggestions about improving the ratio for enhanced program effectiveness. All adult groups showed concern over the counselor-pupil ratio. However, with current ratios, when students were asked if they were able to see the counselor when they needed to, 92% reported that they could see a counselor.

Does this mean counselors are serving students well individually? Do we need more counselors in order to serve students' academic needs and parents' desire for more communication? Do we need to rethink the ratio at "at-risk" schools? Are part-time counselors effective? The findings in this study do not point clearly to a recommendation in this area. However, there continues to be a need to examine this aspect of the program because of the effect it may have on program delivery.

High Ratings

This study, as in the Lehman (1990) study in Roanoke County, suggests that parents had a favorable picture of and were complimentary about the program. Parents value the program. Administrators participating in the joint study by the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals and the Appalachia Education Laboratory felt that the program was needed and good, as did administrators in this Virginia Beach study. The program is valued by all administrators. Students also gave guidance and counseling programs high ratings for program value.

Faculty and counselors rated student personal development highest of all domains. Are these groups more familiar with guidance goals and objectives? Do they see that a larger number of goals relate to this domain? Do faculty and

counselors view these goals as the more important functions of the program? These questions cannot be answered in this study.

Limitations

In addition to the limitations mentioned in Chapter One, several other methodological limitations emerged.

Questions were devised from program goals. Knowledge about these goals was not evenly accessible to all populations. Parents and students have less knowledge about the program.

- Not all questions were alike on each survey, making it more difficult to compare groups' perceptions of the issues.
- Terminology, particularly "student personal development," may not have been easily understood by respondents.
- The current political climate (the State is questioning the necessity of counseling at elementary schools) may have had an effect on respondents, particularly if they felt the program was threatened. This may have elevated counselor, administrator, and faculty responses.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

This study indicates that program planners should examine elementary counseling in the area of home-school relationships and support for academic growth. Comments gathered in this study suggest that parents are not sure what the goals of the counseling program are, but do feel the goals are positive. A recurring theme in the parents' response pattern was the need for more information. Although counselors hold conferences and send home information, not enough parents are getting the message frequently enough to feel knowledgeable about the program. This study indicates that support for academic growth is also a relative weakness. Perhaps elementary counselors need to examine classroom lessons on test-taking and study skills. Counselors should design classroom guidance lessons to help students with development of study skills. Counselors could also work more regularly on helping students develop test-taking skills.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are many avenues to explore in elementary guidance program evaluation. Among future studies that would add to information about elementary guidance and counseling would be the following:

1. A future replication of this study might ask of the participants, "What domain is most important? What goals are most important?" A ranking of these would help schools to determine their program strengths and weaknesses.
2. Since counseling tends to respond to the needs of the population, an analysis of opinions about counseling programs by school may be helpful to the staff of that particular school.
3. It would be beneficial to repeat this survey or a similar one in five years or less. This would provide additional feedback, perhaps in the framework of a different political climate. Such a study would give a basis for comparison of public opinions.
4. How counselors spend their time would be an excellent study to help add information and to determine program value.
5. Are counselors assigned in the appropriate ratio? Should they be assigned counseling programs on an as-needed basis?
6. What are the variables that can help to explain the differences among groups? Is it familiarity with the

program? Is it a perceived need for support by
educators?

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APPENDIX A: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDANCE REGULATIONS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITING PUBLIC

SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA

VR 270-01-0012

§ 6.3. Guidance and Counseling.

Staff shall establish a broad-based process for determining the particular guidance and counseling needs of students and for planning how best to meet these needs. Guidance and counseling shall be provided for all students as needed to achieve the following:

1. Ensure that individual curriculum planning is provided at the middle and secondary level to assist each student in selecting appropriate and challenging courses;
2. Provide opportunities for parents, teachers, and other adults to participate in planned activities that encourage the personal, social, educational, and career development of students;
3. Provide employment counseling and placement services to furnish information about employment opportunities available to students graduating from or leaving school;

4. Provide for the coordination of a testing program that includes orientation to test-taking, use of test data, and the interpretation and use of student records data;
5. Provide for the evaluation of the guidance program by the principal, counselor(s), staff, and parents;
6. Ensure that at least 60% of the time of each member of the guidance staff shall be devoted to counseling of students;
7. Ensure that each student has a program of studies each year that contributes to meeting graduation requirements.

§ 8.1. Staff Required.

A. Each school shall have the required staff with proper certification and endorsement. The following shall be the minimum staffing according to type of school and student enrollment:

POSITION	ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE	SECONDARY
Principal	1 half-time to 299 1 full-time at 300	1 full-time	1 full-time
Assistant Principal	1 half-time at 600 1 full-time at 900	1 full-time each 600	1 full-time each 600
Librarian	Part-time to 299 1 full-time at 300	1 half-time to 299 1 full-time at 300 2 full-time at 1,000	1 half-time to 299 1 full-time at 300 2 full-time at 1,000
Guidance Counselors	1 hour per day per 100 1 full-time at 500 1 hour per day additional time per 100 or major fraction	1 period per 80 1 full-time at 400 1 additional period per 80 or major fraction	1 period per 70 1 full-time at 350 1 additional period per 70 or major fraction
Clerical	Part-time to 299 1 full-time at 300	1 full time and 1 additional full-time for each 600 beyond 200 and 1 full-time for the library at 750	1 full time and 1 additional full-time for each 600 beyond 200 and 1 full-time for the library at 750

B. A combined school, such as K-12, shall meet at all grade levels the staffing requirements for the highest-grade level in that school. This requirement shall apply to all staff, except the guidance staff, and shall be based on the school's total enrollment. The guidance staff requirement

shall be based on the enrollment at the various school organization levels as defined in these regulations.

C. The principal of each middle and secondary school shall be employed on a twelve-month basis.

D. Each secondary school with 350 or more students and each middle school with 400 or more students shall employ at least one member of the guidance staff for 11 months.

E. Middle school teachers with a seven-period day may teach 30 class periods per week, provided all teachers with more than 25 class periods per week have one period per day unencumbered of all teaching and/or supervisory duties.

F. The secondary classroom teacher's standard load shall be no more than 25 class periods per week. One class period each day, unencumbered by supervisory or teaching duties, shall be provided for every full-time classroom teacher for instructional planning. Teachers of block programs with no more than 120 student periods per day may teach 30 class periods per week. Teachers who teach very small classes may teach 30 class periods per week, provided the teaching load does not exceed 75 student periods per day. If a classroom teacher teaches 30 class periods per week with more than 75 student periods per day (120 in block programs) an appropriate contractual arrangement and compensation shall be provided.

G. Middle or secondary school teachers shall teach no more than 750 student periods per week; however, physical education and music teachers may teach 1,000 student periods per week.

H. Each school shall report the extent to which an unencumbered lunch is provided for all classroom teachers.

I. The number of students in special and vocational education classrooms shall comply with regulations of the Board of Education.

J. Pupil personnel services, including visiting teachers/school social workers, school psychologists, and guidance counselors, shall be available to all students as necessary to promote academic achievement and provide assistance in preventing dropouts and substance abuse.

APPENDIX B: VIRGINIA STATE GUIDANCE GOALS

State of Virginia Goals and Objectives of Elementary School Guidance and Counseling

The goal of elementary guidance and counseling is to aid children to master the academic, social, and personal developmental tasks of childhood essential for positive growth. This means that guidance is concerned with all aspects of pupil development. Emphasis is also upon the early identification of children's problems and the provision of appropriate interventions to prevent these problems from becoming overwhelming.

Achieving the goal of maximizing the individual development of children requires a collaborative effort by counselors, parents, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. In order that appropriate learning experiences and services be provided, program objectives must be established.

The following objectives of elementary guidance and counseling are related directly to the developmental needs of children.

Objectives

1. Develop academic skills and competencies.
2. Understand self; i.e., feelings, modes of behavior, interests, strengths, values, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes, and develops positive, realistic self-concept.

3. Understand others and learn effective modes of interacting and communicating for the establishment of positive relationships.
4. Acquire effective problem solving, decision-making, and coping and mastery skills.
5. Become self-directive and responsible for one's own behavior.
6. Develop understanding of and positive attitudes toward school, the community, and society.
7. Acquire positive attitudes toward learning and effective study skills to maximize intellectual development.
8. Develop an understanding of the world of work, feelings of competency, of self as a worker, and positive attitudes toward work.

APPENDIX C: SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

**POLICIES, PRINCIPLES, AND STANDARDS
FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ACCREDITED BY THE
COMMISSION ON ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS
FOR USE AS A CHECKLIST DURING 1997-1998 SCHOOL YEAR**

The professional staff of each elementary school shall include counselors or other school-based professional personnel whose sole function shall be to provide guidance services as provided in the following chart:

MINIMUM PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

MEMBERSHIP	PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL
1 - 499	.5
500 - 749	1
750 - 999	1.5
1000 - 1249	2
1250 - 1499	2.5
1500 -	3

APPENDIX D: DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILES BY MURO AND DINKMEYER

**A Description of the Developmental Profiles of
Elementary School Children by Muro and Dinkmeyer (1977)**

DEVELOPMENTAL AGES	COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS
The Five Year Old Child	
1) "Good," helpful, conforming.	1) Collaboration with teacher in classroom guidance is important.
2) Attempts only those things ensuring success.	2) Use positive approach, not problem-centered.
3) Need attention, affection, and praise.	3) Use play, art, media as tools for communication.
4) Energetic and "fidgety".	4) Guidance activities and counseling session should be kept brief due to short attention spans of five-year-old.
5) Short attention span.	
6) May show opposite extremes of behavior.	
7) "Good" behavior may break up as school year progresses.	
The Six Year Old Child	
1) Extremely egocentric; wants to be center of attention, "best" and "first".	1) Continue working closely with teacher.
2) Boundless energy.	2) Use play media.
3) May be oppositional, silly, brash, critical?	3) Use positive approaches as child continues to resist problem areas.
4) Cries easily; show a variety of tension-releasing behaviors.	4) Help child control impulses and provide limits.
5) Attachment to teacher.	5) Role-playing can be effective.
6) Has difficulty being flexible.	6) Bibliocounseling helps.
7) Fantasy is often real.	7) Counsel individuals early in day.
	8) View Most "crises" as developmental.
	9) Counseling groups should be limited in size to two or three children.

DEVELOPMENTAL AGES	COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS
The Seven Year Old Child	
1) Behavior calmer organized, thoughtful.	1) Child is now more amenable to verbal approaches.
2) Can begin to reason and concentrate.	2) Classroom meeting and group guidance can be successful.
3) May worry, be self-critical and express lack of confidence.	3) Child can show self-insight, but doesn't want to be a "problem" child.
4) Demanding of teacher's time.	4) Counseling can focus on feelings.
5) Dislikes being singled out, even for praise.	5) Use fantasy as tool.
	6) Somewhat longer sessions are possible.
The Eight Year Old Child	
1) Explosive age; excitable, dramatic, and inquisitive.	1) Counseling groups may be expanded to include six children.
2) "Know-it-all" attitude.	2) Focus on peer relationships.
3) Able to assume more responsibility for actions.	3) Focus on self-control and self-regulation.
4) Active seeker of praise.	4) Can use rational approaches.
5) May undertake more than can be handled successfully.	5) Children have less interest in play media.
6) Self-critical.	
7) Recognizes needs of others.	
The Nine Year Old Child	
1) "General confusion" age.	1) Counselor may find it more difficult to establish close relationships.
2) Distance between child and adults; may rebel against authority.	2) Group counseling, especially with structured games and activities, works well.
3) Importance of group membership.	3) Counseling verbal techniques can be used as "leads".
4) Seeks independence.	4) Classroom meetings, values, and feelings groups are constructive.
5) High activity level.	5) Focus on self-concept.
6) Can express wide range of emotions and verbalize easily.	
7) Can empathize.	
8) Can think independently and critically, but tied to peer standards.	
9) Increasing sense of truthfulness.	
10) Typically not self-confident.	

DEVELOPMENTAL AGES	COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS
The Ten Year Old Child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Positive approach to life. 2) Tends to be obedient, good-natured and fun. 3) Surprising scope of interest. 4) TV is very important; identifies with TV characters. 5) Capable of increasing independence. 6) Increase in truthfulness, dependability. 7) Improvement in self-concept and acceptance of others. 8) Forms good personal relationships with teachers and counselors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Perfect time for group counseling, group guidance, classroom meetings, self-concept groups, values clarification. 2) Educational TV programs are of high interest. 3) Likes biblio-counseling. 4) Can arrive at own insights in individual counseling. 5) May make brief, spontaneous self-referrals. 6) Can learn to be co-leaders and peer counselors.
The Eleven Year Old Child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Heading toward adolescence. 2) Shows more self-assertion, curiosity. 3) Sociable. 4) Physical exuberance, restless, wiggly, talks a lot. 5) Range and intensity of emotionality; moody, easily frustrated. 6) Can relate feelings. 7) Competitive, wants to excel, may put down "out group". 8) "Off-color" humor, silliness. 9) Teases and tussles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Counselors and teachers need patience and sense of humor. 2) In-depth counseling is rare; emphasize action rather than insight. 3) Functions well in groups; same-sex groups are easier to manage. 4) Be ready to respond to sexual interest and questions, especially from girls. 5) Forming contracts and making joint plans can be successful. 6) Counseling sometimes tends to center around teacher as "enemy".

DEVELOPMENTAL AGES	COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS
The Twelve Year Old Child	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Age of in-between childish and mature behavior. 2) Spirited, enthusiastic. 3) Can stay put longer; self-control. 4) Growing sense of intuition and insight into self and others. 5) Less moody; may be good-natured around adults. 6) Becoming increasingly self-reliant and self-centered. 7) Curious but not ready for long-term planning. 8) Strong desires to be like peers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ideal age for group counseling. 2) Mixed-sex groups can now be utilized. 3) Likes activities designed to identify potentials. 4) Counselor may find sex an important issue with misinformation concern. 5) Counselor can begin to use "adult" counseling skills and techniques.

APPENDIX E: VIRGINIA BEACH GUIDANCE GOALS

Virginia Beach Division Guidance Goals

Guidance is for every student and is concerned with all aspects of pupil development. Guidance and counseling seeks to ensure positive social and emotional growth as necessary for academic achievement. The major focus of guidance at the elementary, junior high and senior high levels is to assist students in performing academically and in preparing for a productive life.

The Guidance and Counseling program K-12 will include the following goals:

- (1) Acquaint all students with guidance services.
- (2) Aid the student in recognizing his individuality, dignity, and worth.
- (3) Help students develop positive attitudes toward school, the community, and society.
- (4) Assist students with educational, vocational, social, and personal development.
- (5) Help students understand and learn to cope with academic, emotional, social, and physical changes occurring in the transition from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.
- (6) Offer individual and group counseling for all students.
- (7) Help students to acquire realistic understandings of themselves and to utilize this information for decision making.

- (8) Help students develop healthy peer relationships.
- (9) Help students to become self-directed and responsible for their own behavior.
- (10) Advise students in appropriate course selection to help them benefit as much as possible from the educational program.
- (11) Foster positive attitudes toward learning and the development of effective study skills.
- (12) Identify and attempt to resolve student problems that interfere with learning.
- (13) Assist teachers with career education programs in content areas.
- (14) Assist students in formulating plans for the future by encouraging them to continue a program of advanced education and/or to enter the world of work.
- (15) Promote closer home-school relationships.
- (16) Assist students and parents to obtain needed special school and/or community services.
- (17) Collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other appropriate personnel to meet the needs of all students.
- (18) Conduct a variety of evaluative activities to indicate strengths and weaknesses of the guidance services within each school.

**APPENDIX F: REGULATION ESTABLISHING STANDARDS
FOR ACCREDITING PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA ADOPTED BY THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION SEPTEMBER 1997**

**Regulations Establishing Standards for
Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia**

8 VAC 20-131-240. Administrative and Support Staff Required.

A. Each school shall have the required staff with proper licenses and endorsements. The following shall be the minimum administrative and support staffing according to type of school and student enrollment:

1. Position: principal; elementary: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300; Middle: one full-time; secondary: one full-time.

2. Position: assistant principal; elementary: one half-time at 600, one full-time at 900; middle: one full-time each 600; secondary: one full-time each 600.

3. Position: librarian; elementary: part time to 299, one full-time at 300; middle: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300, two full-time at 1000; secondary: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300, two full-time at 1000.

4. Position: guidance counselors or reading specialists; elementary: one hour per day per 100, one full-time at 500, one hour per day additional time per 100 or major fraction.

5. Position: guidance counselor: middle: one period per 80, one full-time at 400, one additional period per 80 or major fraction; secondary: one period per 70, one full-time at 350, one additional period per 70 or major fraction.

6. Position: clerical; elementary: part time to 299, one full-time at 300; middle: one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 beyond 200 and one full-time for the library at 750; secondary: one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 beyond 200 and one full-time for the library at 750.

B. A combined school, such as K-12, shall meet at all grade levels the staffing requirements for the highest grade level in that school. This requirement shall apply to all staff, except the guidance staff, and shall be based on the school's total enrollment. The guidance staff requirement shall be based on the enrollment at the various school organization levels as defined in these regulations.

C. The principal of each middle and secondary school shall be employed on a twelve-month basis.

D. Each secondary school with 350 or more students and each middle school with 400 or more students shall employ at least one member of the guidance staff for 11 months. Guidance counseling shall be provided for students to ensure that a program of studies contributing to the student's academic achievement and meeting the graduation requirements specified in 8 VAC 20-131-50 are being followed. In addition, the counseling program shall provide for a minimum of 60% of the time of each member of the guidance staff devoted to such counseling of students.

E. Middle school teachers in schools with a seven-period day may teach 150 student periods per day or 30 class periods per week, provided all teachers with more than 25 class periods per week have one period per day unencumbered of all teaching and/or supervisory duties.

F. The secondary classroom teacher's standard load shall be no more than 25 class periods per week. one class period each day, unencumbered by supervisory or teaching duties, shall be provided for every full-time classroom teacher for instructional planning. Teachers of block programs with no more than 120 student periods per day may teach 30 class periods per week. Teachers who teach very small classes may teach 30 class periods per week, provided the teaching load does not exceed 75 student periods per day. If a classroom teacher teaches 30 class periods per week with more than 75 student periods per day (120 in block programs) an appropriate contractual arrangement and compensation shall be provided.

G. Middle or secondary school teachers shall teach no more than 750 student periods per week; however, physical education and music teachers may teach 1,000 student periods per week.

H. Each school shall report the extent to which an unencumbered lunch is provided for all classroom teachers.

I. The number of students in special and vocational education classrooms shall comply with regulations of the Board of Education.

J. Pupil personnel services, including visiting teachers/school social workers, school psychologists, and

guidance counselors, shall be available as necessary to promote academic achievement.

APPENDIX G: PARENT LETTER AND SURVEY



Virginia Beach City Public Schools

January 19, 1998

Dear Parent:

I am Susan Torma, Assistant Principal at Red Mill Elementary School. As a part of my doctoral work at Virginia Tech, I am conducting a study of the elementary school guidance program in the Virginia Beach Public Schools. I am conducting this study in hopes that the results of this survey will be helpful in improving guidance services to children in our schools. Your opinions are very important to me.

As the parent of an elementary student, you were randomly chosen to participate in this study. I am very interested in your responses. I hope that you will take a few minutes of your time to complete this important survey. While the survey is numbered for accounting purposes, your responses will remain confidential.

The results of this survey will be shared with the Department of Guidance and Counseling of the Virginia Beach Public Schools and will be published on Virginia Tech's Homepage under "Electronic Theses and Dissertations" this spring.

I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have. You can contact me at Red Mill Elementary (426-7396) or via email at Storma@prodigy.net. I would greatly appreciate your prompt response in the enclosed envelope by Tuesday, February 3, 1998.

Thank you for your participation,

S. Torma
Assistant Principal
Red Mill Elementary School

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON GUIDANCE SERVICES

Please take a few minutes of your time to share your opinions by answering the following questions about the elementary guidance program. Circle the answer that best reflects your opinion.

- | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------------|--|
| 1. I have had a child/children have attending the Virginia Beach Public elementary schools for | 0-2 years | 3-5 years | |
| | 6-8 years | 9 or more years | |
| 2. I have attended parent workshops given by my child's/children's elementary school guidance department. | No | Yes | |

For the following items, please use these response categories:

SD = Strongly Disagree D - Disagree A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 3. With the current counselor-pupil ratio of one counselor for every 500 elementary students, counselors are able to meet the needs of students at my child's/children's school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 4. The guidance program at my child's/children's school is an important part of the total school program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 5. The guidance program has been helpful to me as a parent. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 6. My child/children should talk to the counselor about problems that affect success in school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 7. Promoting closer home-school relationships is an important goal of the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 8. The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps to promote closer home-school relationships. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 9. I feel positive about the guidance program at my child's/children's school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 10. The parent groups offered by the guidance department at my child's/children's school are appropriate for parent needs. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 11. I have received information about my child's/children's guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 12. The guidance counselors at my child's/children's school are available for parent conferences. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 13. Facilitating students' personal development is an important goal of the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 14. The program at my child's/children's school has a positive impact on students' personal development. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 15. The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students cope with developmental changes. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 16. The guidance program at my child's/children's | SD | D | A | SA |

school helps students to understand themselves.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 17. | The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students to understand others. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 18. | The guidance program at my child's/children's school supports student academic growth. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 19. | The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students with study skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 20. | The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students with test-taking skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 21. | The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students with their attitude toward academics. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 22. | I feel the benefits of guidance services are worth the cost. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 23. | Tell how you think the elementary guidance program could be more effective. | | | | |

24. Please make any additional comments that you would like to share about the elementary guidance program in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

APPENDIX H: ADMINISTRATOR LETTER AND SURVEY



Virginia Beach City Public Schools

January 19, 1998

Dear Administrator:

As a part of my doctoral work at Virginia Tech, I am conducting a study of elementary guidance and counseling in the Virginia Beach Public Schools. The department of Accountability and the School Board has approved this study. Results may be helpful in program analysis.

I am seeking your opinions about the program. In addition to all elementary administrators and all elementary guidance counselors, I will be surveying a sample of fifth grade students, parents of elementary school students, and teachers.

Would you please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire by Tuesday, February 3, 1998, and return it to me at Red Mill Elementary via inter-departmental mail. I am very interested in your responses. While the questionnaire has an identification number for tracking purposes, your individual responses will remain confidential.

Results will be available in May and published on Virginia Tech's Homepage under "Electronic Theses and Dissertations." I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Please contact me at Red Mill Elementary School (496-7396) or by email at Storma@prodigy.net.

Thank you for your participation,

S. Torma
Assistant Principal
Red Mill Elementary School

ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE ON GUIDANCE SERVICES

Please take a few minutes of your time to share your opinions by answering the following questions about the elementary guidance program. Circle the answer that best reflects your opinion.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. I have been assigned to my present school for-- | 0-2 years
6-8 years | 3-5 years
9 or more
years |
| 2. The guidance department is involved in teacher workshops and in-services at my school. | No | Yes |

For the following items, please use these response categories:

SD = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 3. With the current counselor-pupil ratio of one counselor for every 500 elementary students, counselors are able to meet the needs of students in my school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 4. The guidance program is an important part of this school's total school program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 5. The guidance program has been helpful to me as an administrator. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 6. Students should talk to the counselor about problems that affect success in school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 7. Promoting closer home-school relationships is an important goal of the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 8. The guidance program at my school helps to promote closer home-school relationships. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 9. Parents feel positive toward the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 10. The parent groups offered by the guidance department are appropriate for the parent needs. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 11. Parents have been sent information about the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 12. The counselors are available for parent conferences. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 13. Facilitating students' personal development is an important goal of the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 14. The guidance program has a positive impact on students' personal development. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 15. The guidance program helps students cope with developmental changes. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 16. The guidance program helps students to understand themselves. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 17. The guidance program helps students to understand others. | SD | D | A | SA |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 18. | The guidance program supports student academic growth. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 19. | The guidance program helps students with study skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 20. | The guidance program helps students with test-taking skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 21. | The guidance program helps students with their attitude toward academics. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 22. | I feel the benefits of the guidance services are worth the cost. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 23. | Tell how you think the guidance program could be more effective. | | | | |

24. Please make any additional comments that you would like to share about the elementary guidance program in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

APPENDIX I: FACULTY LETTER AND SURVEY



Virginia Beach City Public Schools

January 19, 1998

Dear Teacher:

As a part of my doctoral dissertation at Virginia Tech, I am conducting a study of the elementary guidance program in Virginia Beach Public Schools. As an instructional leader, your opinions are very important.

Please take a few minutes of your time and respond to the attached survey and return it to me at Red Mill Elementary School via inter-departmental mail by Tuesday, February 3, 1998. While these surveys are numbered for tracking purposes only, your individual responses will remain confidential.

The information that will be collected from parents, elementary guidance counselors, fifth-grade students, elementary administrators, and fellow teachers will be shared with the Department of Guidance Counseling. Results may be useful in program planning.

If you have any questions about my study, please call me at Red Mill Elementary School (496-7396) or contact me by email at Storma@prodigy.net.

Thank you for your participation,

S. Torma
Assistant Principal
Red Mill Elementary School

ELEMENTARY FACULTY SURVEY

Please take a few minutes of your time to share your opinions by answering the following questions about the elementary guidance program. Circle the answer that best reflects your opinion.

1. a. My current position is considered--
- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Classroom Teacher | Other instructional specialist or support personnel |
|-------------------|---|
- b. I have been a teacher in a Virginia Beach Public Elementary School for--
- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 0-2 years | 3-5 years |
| 6-8 years | 9 or more |
2. I have attended workshops and in-services given by my school's guidance department.
- | | |
|----|-----|
| No | Yes |
|----|-----|

For the following items, please use these response categories:

SD = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 3. With the current counselor-pupil ratio of one counselor for every 500 elementary students, counselors are able to meet the needs of students in my school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 4. The guidance program is an important part of this school's total school program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 5. The guidance program has been helpful to me as a teacher. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 6. Students should talk to the counselor about problems that affect success in school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 7. Promoting closer home-school relationships is an important goal of the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 8. The guidance program helps to promote closer home-school relationships. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 9. Parents of my students feel positive about the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 10. The parent groups offered by the guidance department are appropriate for parent needs. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 11. Parents have been sent information about the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 12. The counselors are available for parent conferences. | SD | D | A | SA |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 13. | Facilitating students' personal development is an important goal of the guidance program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 14. | The guidance program has a positive impact on students' personal development. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 15. | The guidance program helps students cope with developmental changes. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 16. | The guidance program helps students to understand themselves. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 17. | The guidance program helps students to understand others. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 18. | The guidance program supports student academic growth. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 19. | The guidance program helps students with study skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 20. | The guidance program helps students with test-taking skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 21. | The guidance program helps students with their attitude toward academics. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 22. | I feel the benefits of the guidance services are worth the cost. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 23. | Tell how you think the guidance program could be more effective. | | | | |
| 24. | Please make any additional comments that you would like to share about the elementary guidance program in the Virginia Beach City Public Elementary Schools. | | | | |

APPENDIX J: GUIDANCE COUNSELOR LETTER AND SURVEY



Virginia Beach City Public Schools

January 19, 1998

Dear Guidance Counselor:

As a part of my doctoral dissertation, I am conducting a study of the elementary guidance program in the Virginia Beach Public Schools. As a counselor, your opinions are very important.

Please take a few minutes of your time and respond to the following survey by Tuesday, February 3, 1998. Return the survey to me at Red Mill Elementary School by inter-departmental mail. Surveys are numbered for tracking purposes only, and your individual responses will remain confidential.

If you would like to see the results or know more about my study, please call me at Red Mill Elementary School (496-7396) or contact me by email at Storma@prodigy.net. I will be glad to send you a summary in the spring.

I appreciate your support in this important project.

Thank you for your participation,

S. Torma
Assistant Principal
Red Mill Elementary School

COUNSELOR QUESTIONNAIRE ON GUIDANCE SERVICES

Please take a few minutes of your time to share your opinion by answering the following questions about the elementary guidance program. Circle the answer that best reflects your opinion.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1. I have been assigned to my present school(s) for--</p> | <p>0-2 years
6-8 years</p> | <p>3-5 years
9 or more
years</p> |
| <p>2. Mark the activities you are involved in--</p> | | |
| <p><input type="radio"/> Student Hosts</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Peer Tutors</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Raisin Up Club/BUG Roll</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Student Recognition Programs</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> Multicultural/Black Culture</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Community Outreach</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Coord. volunteers to work with students</p> <p><input type="radio"/> New Student Orientation</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> Teacher In-services</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Incentive Programs</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Mentoring (SOS)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Conflict Mediation</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Walking/Wellness Activities</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Cooperative Discipline</p> <p><input type="radio"/> PEP</p> <p><input type="radio"/> PTA Presentations</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Drug Prevention Activities</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other (please list)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p> | |

For the following items, please use these response categories:

SD = Strongly Disagree D - Disagree A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| <p>3. With the current counselor-pupil ratio of one counselor for every 500 elementary students, I am able to meet the needs of students in my school.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>4. The guidance program is valued by the staff as an important part of this school's total program.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>5. The guidance program is supported by the staff.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>6. Students at my school know how to get to talk to me.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>7. Promoting closer home-school relationships is an important goal of the guidance program.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>8. The guidance program at my school helps to promote closer home-school relationships.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>9. Parents feel positive about the guidance program.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>10. The parent groups offered are appropriate for parents' needs.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>11. Parents have been sent information about the guidance program.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>12. The counselor(s) is/are available for parent conferences.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |
| <p>13. Facilitating students' personal development is an important goal of the guidance program.</p> | SD | D | A | SA |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 14. | The guidance program has facilities that are adequate for services. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 15. | The guidance program helps students cope with developmental changes. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 16. | The guidance program helps students to understand themselves. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 17. | The guidance program is able to provide classroom guidance frequently enough to meet the needs of the students. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 18. | The guidance program supports student academic growth. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 19. | The guidance program helps students with study skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 20. | The guidance program helps students with test-taking skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 21. | The guidance program helps students with their attitude toward academics. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 22. | I feel that my collateral duties do not seriously interfere with delivery of service. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 23. | Tell how you think the elementary guidance program could be more effective. | | | | |

24. Please make any additional comments that you would like to share about the elementary guidance program in the Virginia Beach City Public Elementary Schools.

APPENDIX K: STUDENT LETTER AND SURVEY



Virginia Beach City Public Schools

January 19, 1998

Dear Teacher:

My name is Susan Torma and I am an assistant principal at Red Mill Elementary School. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a study of the elementary guidance program in Virginia Beach Public Schools. Your class has been randomly chosen to participate.

I have chosen 5th grade students to participate because they have possibly had the most contact with guidance counselors during their school years and as the oldest elementary student may have more valid responses. Your student's opinions are important to me and to this study.

Please send these home with your students on Tuesday, January 20, 1998, and collect them daily. Remind students that the final date for collection is Tuesday, February 3, 1998. Please return all collected surveys to me via interdepartmental mail by Thursday, February 5, 1998.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated and the individual opinions of your students will remain anonymous. Their responses will be shared with the Department of Guidance Counseling. Results will be available in the spring may be useful in program planning.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Red Mill Elementary School (426-7396).

Thank you for your participation,

S. Torma
Assistant Principal
Red Mill Elementary School

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Informed Consent for Student Participants of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: A Survey of the Elementary Guidance Counseling Program in Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Investigator: Ms. Susan Torma, Assistant Principal, Red Mill Elementary School

I. Purpose and Procedure

The purpose of this project is to gather information about the Elementary Guidance Counseling Program. A total of approximately 875 fifth grade students in 35 randomly selected classrooms will be asked to complete the attached survey.

II. Risks and Questions

There are no risks nor benefits to you personally if you choose participate. If you have any questions, your parent may contact me at Red Mill Elementary, 426-7396. There are no marks on the survey to identify you.

III. Benefits, Compensation, and Freedom to Withdraw

If you participate, or not, it will not affect your grades. There is no reward for participation. You are free to answer any part of the survey, or simply not respond.

IV. Approval of Research

This research project has been approved.

V. Subjects Responsibilities

If you agree to participate and you have read this please sign below and return this form with your parents form, and the completed survey to your teacher by Tuesday, March 10, 1998.

VI. Subjects Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and Conditions of this project. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Student Signature: _____

Date _____

Please sign both forms and keep one copy.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Informed Consent for Parents/Guardians of Participants of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: A Survey of the Elementary Guidance Counseling Program in Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Investigator: Ms. Susan Torma, Assistant Principal, Red Mill Elementary School

I. Purpose and Procedure

The purpose of this project is to gather information about the Elementary Guidance Counseling Program. This information will be helpful in program planning. A total of approximately 875 fifth grade students in 35 randomly selected classrooms will be asked to complete the attached survey to add to information provided by parent, administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors.

II. Risks and Questions

There are no risks nor benefits to you personally if you choose participate. If you have any questions, your parent may contact me at Red Mill Elementary, 426-7396. There are no marks on the survey to identify participants. Responses will remain confidential. This signed informed consent statement will be separated from the survey before responses are tabulated to further assure anonymity.

III. Benefits, Compensation, and Freedom to Withdraw

Participation, or failure to do so, will not impact student grades. There is no compensation for participation. Students are free to withdraw their responses, answer any part of the survey, or simply not respond.

IV. Approval of Research

This research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and the School Board of the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

V. Subjects Responsibilities

If you agree to for your child to participate and you have read this material and approved, please sign below and return this form with your child, and the completed survey to the teacher by Tuesday, March 10, 1998.

VI. Subjects Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and Conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for my child's participation in this project. If my child participates, he or she may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Parent Signature: _____

Date _____

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

SUSAN C. TORMA, Investigator, Red Mill Elementary School, Virginia Beach	757-426-7396
DR. STEVE PARSON, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, VPI&SU	540-231-9722
DR. CHRISTINA DAWSON, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, VPI&SU	540-231-9715
H.T. HURD, Chair, IRB Research Division, VPI&SU	549-231-5281

Subjects must be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed Informed Consent.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON GUIDANCE SERVICES

Dear Student,

Please take a few minutes of your time to share your opinions by answering the following questions about the elementary guidance program. Circle the answer that best reflects your opinion.

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. I have attended this elementary school-- | 0-2 years | 3-5 years |
| | 5 or more years | |
| 2. The guidance counselor has visited my class this year to give a guidance lesson. | No | Yes |

For the following items, please use these response categories:

SD = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree

NA = Not Applicable

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 3. A school guidance counselor is able to see me when I need to talk. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 4. The guidance program is an important part of this school. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 5. The guidance program has been helpful to me as a student. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 6. It is good to talk to the counselor about problems that affect my education. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 7. The guidance counselor at my school has talked to my parent(s). | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 8. My parent(s) have met with the school guidance counselor. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 9. The guidance counselor has helped me better understand changes that happen in my life. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 10. The guidance counselor has helped me understand myself better. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 11. The guidance counselor has helped me understand other people better. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 12. The guidance counselor has helped me become a better student. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 13. The guidance counselor has helped me with study skills. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 14. The guidance counselor has helped me with test-taking skills. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |
| 15. The guidance counselor has helped me with my attitude toward schoolwork. | SD | D | A | SA | NA |

16. Tell other ways the guidance counselor could help you.

17. Please write anything you would like to share about counseling.

Please return this survey to your classroom teacher by Tuesday, February 3, 1998.

Thank you,

Ms. Torma

APPENDIX L: PARENT STRONGER RESPONSE LETTER



Virginia Beach City Public Schools

February 17, 1998

Dear Parent,

About two weeks ago I wrote to you seeking your opinions on the elementary guidance program in the city public schools. As of today I have not yet received your completed questionnaire. This research may be useful in planning programs for elementary students.

I am writing to you again because each questionnaire is important to the study. Your name was selected by a random sampling process. Only about one of every 98 households was chosen. In order to truly represent the opinions of elementary parents, it is important each parent respond.

In the event your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

S. Torma
Assistant Principal
Red Mill Elementary School

P L E A S E ! ! !

APPENDIX M: FREQUENCY TABLES

Table 7

Frequency and Percentages of Parent Responses to Home-School Relationships

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
7	Promoting closer home-school relationships is an important goal of the guidance program.	16	4.0	3	.8	22	5.5	195	48.9	163	40.6
8	The guidance program at my school helps to promote closer home-school relationships.	26	6.5	9	2.3	43	10.8	248	62.2	73	18.3
9	Parents feel positive toward the guidance program.	27	6.8	11	2.8	36	9.0	235	58.9	90	22.6
10	The parent groups offered by the guidance department are appropriate for the parent needs.	33	8.3	11	2.8	44	11.0	262	65.7	49	12.3
11	Parents have been sent information about the guidance program.	18	4.5	20	5.0	56	14.0	247	61.9	58	14.5
12	The counselors are available for parent conferences.	24	6.0	3	.8	23	5.8	254	63.7	95	23.8

Table 8

Frequency and Percentages of Administrator Responses to Home-School Relationships

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
7	Promoting closer home-school relationships is an important goal of the guidance program.	0	0	1	1.0	0	0	30	30	69	69.0
8	The guidance program at my school helps to promote closer home-school relationships.	1	1.0	0	0	1	1.0	41	41.0	57	57.0
9	Parents feel positive toward the guidance program.	1	1.0	0	0	0	0	55	55.0	44	44.0
10	The parent groups offered by the guidance department are appropriate for the parent needs.	6	6.0	0	0	5	5.0	50	50.0	39	39.0
11	Parents have been sent information about the guidance program.	6	6.0	0	0	0	0	44	44.0	50	50.0
12	The counselors are available for parent conferences.	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	35.0	65	65.0

Table 9

Frequency and Percentages of Faculty Member Responses to Home-School Relationships

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
7	Promoting closer home-school relationships is an important goal of the guidance program.	3	1.0	1	0.3	7	2.3	102	34.2	185	62.1
8	The guidance program at my school helps to promote closer home-school relationships.	7	2.3	3	1.0	14	4.7	155	52.0	119	39.9
9	Parents feel positive toward the guidance program.	25	8.4	3	1.0	8	2.7	164	55.0	98	32.9
10	The parent groups offered by the guidance department are appropriate for the parent needs.	33	11.1	1	0.3	9	3.0	168	56.4	87	29.2
11	Parents have been sent information about the guidance program.	14	4.7	3	1.0	6	2.0	135	45.3	140	47.0
12	The counselors are available for parent conferences.	5	1.7	1	0.3	9	3.0	121	40.6	162	54.4

Table 10

Frequency and Percentages of Guidance Counselor Responses to Home-School Relationships

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
7	Promoting closer home-school relationships is an important goal of the guidance program.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	21.3	63	78.8
8	The guidance program at my school helps to promote closer home-school relationships.	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	30	37.5	50	62.5
9	Parents feel positive about the guidance program.	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	45	56.3	34	42.5
10	The parent groups offered are appropriate for parents' needs.	1	1.3	0	0.0	3	3.8	40	50.0	36	45.0
11	Parents have been sent information about the guidance program.	1	1.3	0	0.0	1	1.3	20	25.0	59	73.8
12	The counselor(s) is/are available for parent conferences.	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	16.3	67	83.8

Table 11

Frequency and Percentages of Student Responses to Home-School Relationships

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree		5 Not Applicable	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
7	The guidance counselor at my school has talked to my parent(s).	2	0.5	31	8.3	87	23.4	108	29.0	72	19.4	72	19.4
8	My parent(s) have met with the school guidance counselor.	1	0.3	32	8.6	87	23.4	122	32.8	64	17.2	66	17.7

Table 12

Frequency and Percentages of Parent Response to Facilitating Student Personal Development

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
13	Facilitating students' personal development is an important goal of the guidance program.	24	6.0	6	1.5	16	4.0	224	56.1	129	32.3
14	The program at my child's/children's school has a positive impact on students' personal development.	34	8.5	8	2.0	33	8.3	228	57.1	96	24.1
15	The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students cope with developmental changes.	35	8.8	6	1.5	34	8.5	243	60.9	81	20.3
16	The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students to understand themselves.	2	8.0	9	2.3	28	7.0	260	65.2	70	17.5
17	The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students to understand others.	2	8.0	6	1.5	31	7.8	266	66.7	64	16.0

Table 13

Frequency and Percentages of Administrators to Facilitating Student Personal Development

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
13	Facilitating students' personal development is an important goal of the guidance program.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0	49	49.0	50	50.0
14	The guidance program has a positive impact on students' personal development.	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0	51	51.0	48	48.0
15	The guidance program helps students cope with developmental changes.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	3.0	56	56.0	41	41.0
16	The guidance program helps students to understand themselves.	1	1.0	0	0.0	2	2.0	62	62.0	35	35.0
17	The guidance program helps students to understand others.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0	57	57.0	42	42.0

Table 14

Frequency and Percentage of Faculty Member Response to Facilitating Student Personal Development

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
13	Facilitating students' personal development is an important goal of the guidance program.	5	1.7	2	.7	7	2.3	108	36.2	176	59.1
14	The guidance program has a positive impact on students' personal development.	4	1.3	2	.7	6	2.0	129	43.3	157	52.7
15	The guidance program helps students cope with developmental changes.	4	1.3	2	.7	11	3.7	138	46.3	143	48.0
16	The guidance program helps students to understand themselves.	4	1.3	2	.7	9	3.0	138	46.3	145	48.7
17	The guidance program helps students to understand others.	4	1.3	2	.7	4	1.3	144	48.3	144	48.3

Table 15

Frequency and Percentage of Guidance Counselors Response to Facilitating Student Personal Development

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
13	Facilitating students' personal development is an important goal of the guidance program.	0	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	18.8	65	81.3
15	The guidance program helps students cope with developmental changes.	1	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	23	28.8	56	70.0
16	The guidance program helps students to understand themselves.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	23	28.8	57	71.3

Table 16

Frequency and Percentage of Student Response to Facilitating Student Personal Development

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree		5 Not Applicable	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
9	The guidance counselor has helped me better understand changes that happen in my life.	0	0.0	12	3.2	40	10.8	172	46.2	115	30.9	33	8.9
10	The guidance counselor has helped me understand myself better.	0	0.0	12	3.2	39	10.5	184	49.5	114	30.6	23	6.2
11	The guidance counselor has helped me understand other people better.	0	0.0	9	2.4	27	17.3	213	57.3	104	28.0	19	5.1

Table 17

Frequency and Percentage of Parent Responses to Support for Academic Growth

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18	The guidance program at my child's/children's school supports student academic growth.	29	7.3	8	2.0	27	6.8	259	64.9	76	19.0
19	The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students with study skills.	42	10.5	9	2.3	69	17.3	221	55.4	58	14.5
20	The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students with test-taking skills.	46	11.5	10	2.5	84	21.1	218	54.6	41	10.3
21	The guidance program at my child's/children's school helps students with their attitude toward academics.	35	8.8	3	0.8	44	11.1	255	63.9	62	15.5

Table 18

Frequency and Percentage of Administrator Responses to Support for Academic Growth

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18	The guidance program supports student academic growth.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	51	51.0	49	49.0
19	The guidance program helps students with study skills.	0	0.0	1	1.0	2	2.0	54	54.0	43	43.0
20	The guidance program helps students with test-taking skills.	2	2.0	0	0.0	12	12.0	45	45.0	41	41.0
21	The guidance program helps students with their attitude toward academics.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0	57	57.0	42	42.0

Table 19

Frequency and Percentage of Faculty Member Responses to Support for Academic Growth

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18	The guidance program supports student academic growth.	3	1.0	2	0.7	14	4.7	149	50.5	130	43.6
19	The guidance program helps students with study skills.	9	3.0	3	1.0	26	8.7	140	47.0	120	40.3
20	The guidance program helps students with test-taking skills.	15	5.0	3	1.0	43	14.4	142	47.7	95	31.9
21	The guidance program helps students with their attitude toward academics.	6	2.0	2	0.7	9	3.0	168	56.4	113	37.9

Table 20

Frequency and Percentage of Guidance Counselor Responses to Support for Academic Growth

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18	The guidance program supports student academic growth.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	23.8	61	76.3
19	The guidance program helps students with study skills.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	21	26.3	59	73.8
20	The guidance program helps students with test-taking skills.	3	3.8	0	0.0	2	2.5	28	35.0	47	58.8
21	The guidance program helps students with their attitude toward academics.	1	1.3	0	0.0	1	1.3	17	21.3	61	76.3

Table 21

Frequency and Percentage of Student Responses to Support for Academic Growth

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree		5 Not Applicable	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
12	The guidance counselor has helped me become a better student.	0	0.0	12	3.2	43	11.6	181	48.7	122	32.8	14	3.8
13	The guidance counselor has helped me with study skills.	1	0.3	24	6.5	66	17.7	167	44.9	81	21.8	33	8.9
14	The guidance counselor has helped me with test-taking skills.	5	0.3	26	7.0	79	21.2	142	38.2	86	23.1	38	10.2
15	The guidance counselor has helped me with my attitude toward schoolwork.	2	0.5	15	4.0	47	12.6	152	40.9	128	34.4	28	7.5

Table 22

Frequency and Percentage of Parents Response of the Value of the Elementary Guidance Program

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
4	The guidance program at my child's/children's school is an important part of the total school program.	13	3.3	8	2.0	21	5.3	207	51.9	150	37.6
5	The guidance program has been helpful to me as a parent.	24	6.0	11	2.8	47	11.8	222	55.6	95	23.8
6	My child/children should talk to the counselor about problems that affect success in school.	13	3.3	3	0.8	12	3.0	213	53.4	158	39.6
22	I feel the benefits of guidance services are worth the cost.	24	6.0	11	2.8	17	4.3	184	46.1	163	40.9

Table 23

Frequency and Percentage of Administrator Response of the Value of the Elementary Guidance Program

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
4	The guidance program is an important part of this school's total school program.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	25	25.0	75	75.0
5	The guidance program has been helpful to me as an administrator.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	26	26.0	74	74.0
6	Students should talk to the counselor about problems that affect success in school.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	24	24.0	76	76.0
22	I feel the benefits of the guidance services are worth the cost.	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	24	24.0	75	75.0

Table 24

Frequency and Percentage of Faculty Member Response of the Value of the Elementary Guidance Program

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
4	The guidance program is an important part of this school's total school program.	3	1.0	2	0.7	11	3.7	66	22.1	216	72.5
5	The guidance program has been helpful to me as an administrator.	5	1.7	4	1.3	17	5.7	113	37.9	159	53.4
6	Students should talk to the counselor about problems that affect success in school.	6	2.0	2	0.7	3	1.0	87	29.2	200	67.1
22	I feel the benefits of the guidance services are worth the cost.	5	1.7	4	1.3	8	2.7	61	20.5	220	73.8

Table 25

Frequency and Percentage of Guidance Counselor Response of the Value of the Elementary Guidance Program

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
4	The guidance program is valued by the staff as an important part of this school's total program.	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.5	27	33.8	51	63.8
5	The guidance program is supported by the staff.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	29	36.3	51	63.8

Table 26

Frequency and Percentage of Student Response of the Value of the Elementary Guidance Program

Item No.	Question	No Answer		1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Agree		4 Strongly Agree		5 Not Applicable	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
4	The guidance program is an important part of this school.	0	0.0	4	1.1	8	2.2	157	42.2	198	53.2	5	1.3
5	The guidance program has been helpful to me as a student.	0	0.0	4	1.1	21	5.6	167	44.9	155	41.7	25	6.7
6	It is good to talk to the counselor about problems that affect my education.	0	0.0	4	1.1	6	1.6	169	45.4	180	48.4	13	3.5

VITA

Susan Elizabeth Cougill was born in Washington, D.C. on October 24, 1947. She was raised on a farm in the Shenandoah Valley near Harrisonburg, Virginia She attended Harrisonburg City Public Schools and Rockingham County Public Schools. Susan graduated from Virginia Wesleyan College in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities. While at Virginia Wesleyan she taught modern dance to young children and this led to her earning an elementary teaching certificate.

In 1975 Susan earned a Master of Science in Early Childhood Education from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. In 1983 she was awarded a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Educational Administration from Old Dominion University.

From 1972 to date, the author has been employed by the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. She has taught second, third, and sixth grades and served as an assistant principal and principal in four elementary schools.

She is a member of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, the Virginia Beach Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Virginia Beach Reading Council. She is a lifetime member of the Virginia Congress of Parent and Teachers Association and a member of the President's Advisory Council at Virginia Wesleyan College.

She is a past-president of the Alumni Council at Virginia Wesleyan College and is a member of various civic and church organizations.

She is married to James David Torma, a registered professional mechanical engineer employed as a supervisor at the Atlantic Division of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command.