Section D: Student Services

Mentoring and Student Advocacy Program

SWSF has continued the student mentoring and advocacy program. The program was designed to insure that each student enrolled in the high school receives the kind of faculty and peer support best suited to his or her individual needs and potential.

The program is based on a two-pronged approach. Nine core faculty members head up a mentoring group of ten to twelve students drawn from across the grades. These mentoring groups meet daily to share campus clean-up tasks and take leave of one another. Regular meetings of the groups take place on intermittently. These mentoring groups provide students with opportunities for both having a designated point of reference in the faculty and a group of mixed-age peers with whom they can share their own experiences and in whom they can find support. There has also been an effort to encourage groups of mentees to do community service together as a group in the greater community. This is in its infancy. Faculty mentors keep the rest of the faculty informed on how their students are doing both academically and in regard to citizenship.

All non-clinical issues are addressed by the faculty mentors, in conjunction with the Guidance Counselor and the High School Core Group. These include short-term tutorials, the development of study and organizational skills, addressing communication and behavioral issues, facilitation in peer and, when requested, in student/parent conflicts. Clinical and therapeutic concerns, including long-term tutoring, ongoing counseling, academic testing, and remedial work are referred to professionals. When possible, the school refers students to counselors, therapists, or tutors who know the Waldorf approach and are willing to work with the faculty in supporting the student in question.

For students in need of special attention, a support circle of faculty members may be formed. These faculty members work with the student to articulate specific goals and insure that the student meets them. Support circles may focus on either academic or citizenship issues, or both.

Class Advisors

The Class Advisor holds the well-being of the class as a whole, holding regular class meetings. The Class Advisor schedules and moderates parent evenings. S/he may facilitate class field trips, including the Senior Class trip. Grade-related fundraising events are also sponsored by the class advisors.
Mentors

The mentor is responsible for guiding and supporting the students in all areas regarding learning needs, personal concerns, and academic choices.

Students at SWSF High School are assigned, (in groups of up to 12 students), to experienced teachers who are their “mentors” for a year. The students have a say in the selection of their mentor, but the faculty makes the final decision. Mentor groups include students of all high school ages, and there is a strong emphasis on peer mentoring. The mentors and mentees have the following relationship and function.

Mentor meetings give students not only the opportunity to speak regularly about their life at SWSF, but also enable the growth of a peer support system. The mentors meet their groups at the end of each day, during which the students do brief chores in various parts of the school. After about five minutes of chores, the mentor teachers say goodbye to the students and send them off. This is a comfortable way to have daily closure and to have an opportunity to get a feel for the daily life of the students. Students who may not, for one reason or another, show up on a certain day are called in the evening by the mentor as a check-in.

Individual students are responsible to regularly check in with the mentors for help with organization, assistance, and guidance, on a general basis as well as regarding specific changes in schedule or school attendance. The mentor groups meet periodically (every four to six weeks) for a group check- in, and deal with issues at hand.
High School Student Assessment

Assessment is done in many ways to reflect each student’s grasp of the subject matter. Assignments are created to encompass many types of learning styles, with Main Lesson book creation being most common. Testing, essays, and projects are graded. Students are given feedback on assessment forms that include the insights from the teacher on seven different aspects of the learning that may differ from subject to subject. They are: understanding of the subject matter, clarity and development of thoughts, presentation skills, effort, organization, collegiality, and participation. Additionally, there is room for general comments from the teacher, along with the grade and how it was computed. On the back of the assessment form, the students self-assess in the same seven areas and give themselves a grade that they think reflects their knowledge and effort in the class. As a faculty we revisit assessment and accommodations in our faculty meeting time as well as a result of child studies focusing on individual students.

College Counseling, College Placement Testing

College counseling is available to all students in the high school. In the tenth and eleventh grades, the PSAT is given to all students. Post-secondary counseling begins in tenth grade with an overview of colleges and the process of exploring admission. Ways in which students might use their summers productively begins in the ninth grade. All grades may choose to attend presentations by college representatives on campus.

Tenth grade practice-PSATs are often the students’ first experience with standardized testing. The formal PSAT is given in the eleventh grade, and students are encouraged to sign up for the SAT at the end of eleventh and early in twelfth grades. We have arranged for 1:1, elective and private preparation courses (for juniors) to be available on campus. The counseling office also arranges for special accommodations for students with learning differences and makes arrangements for on-campus administration of the PSAT/SAT/ACT. Feedback on test results is given in individual meetings that begin the college counseling process.

In the eleventh grade, students take a more in-depth look at colleges and universities, vocational explorations, and the possibility of taking a year to explore life. Both group and individual meetings with parents and students are held. Students are encouraged to use our college counseling library and video collection, the internet, and college fairs, and to visit colleges to explore their options. We offer a “College Night”, usually with a featured speaker, twice a year. Financial Aid workshops are held in January of each year for seniors and their parents.

Students are directed towards enrichment activities such as community service projects locally and in various parts of the world, summer programs on college campuses, jobs, and shadowing for career exploration.

During the senior year, final college selections are made for some students, while others continue to explore. The counselor works closely with students and parents to complete the recommendations and school reports. National Merit Scholarship and other scholarship recommendations are also written.
Career counseling becomes individualized after a few introductory group sessions. Career counseling is usually the forum in which students think about what they see as life purpose or destiny and how personal values might manifest through the choice of post-secondary education and career. In tenth and eleventh grades, the counselor exposes the students to various career and interest assessments.

Counseling Services Assessment

Strengths

- The program is strong, with more services offered each year. Our counselor with college-advising expertise was hired in 2006. She works closely with the students, especially in eleventh and twelfth grades. All students and parents have open access to receive excellent support in the college process.
- 6-10th grade counseling position is in the process of being filled. The former Counselor was quite gifted, and brought much experience, warmth to the position. She was a great resource.
- All students in tenth and eleventh grade participate in standardized testing, and scores have been increasing for many.
- Many seniors have taken part in the summer enrichment activities and are beginning the application process early.
- Academic performance remains strong, tied to increased motivation due to self-exploration and goal setting.
- Summertime and set-aside time during the year for the seniors to research and receive application support has been highly effective.
- We just became active on Parchment, a service that sends official transcripts electronically, as well as having a college-search component.
- We recently added a UC a-g GPA to our transcripts, as it was difficult for students to calculate by themselves.

Challenges

- Transcripts need ongoing oversight to make sure that they are correct and complete. This has been much improved over the year, and communications are strong between the Counselor and the Registrar.
- Strong need to hire the replacement 6-10th grade counselor ASAP. We are covering the position with a Student Liaison position, additional hours of 11th/12th grade Counselor and on-call help from two past Counselors.
- Some students wait until the last minute to initiate the college application process, despite opportunities and encouragement to apply early.
- Need to involve parents more in the CalGrant and Doyle Scholarship process. This has traditionally been done with just the seniors, but this has resulted in occasional problems. Communicating more with parents around these details and deadlines in addition to working with students is important.
Goals

- Continue to work with UC A-G to update and expand classes: Art III, Integrated Math 1, 2, 3
- Expand awareness of gap year programs and internship/apprenticeship programs for all students. This is now done 1:1 and in group activities.

Personal Counseling and Social/Emotional Education

The guidance counselors are available to the students, parents, and faculty on an ongoing basis, throughout the year. The counselors serve as consultants in student matters in school, social and home-life, and offer guidance to help the students make good life and educational decisions, developing critical thinking skills. Guidance counselors work hand in hand with faculty, mentors and Core Group to help overcome and anticipate challenges and find healthy solutions and resources.

Students have an opportunity to make an appointment, by referral or on a drop-in basis, to meet the guidance counselors for help. Although every attempt is made to guide and lead students to active involvement in understanding and meeting their problems and issues, referrals are frequently made back to the teachers involved, as well as to outside counseling services. It is important to note that the School does not attempt to offer intensive counseling or psychotherapy, as there are many varied approaches that would be applicable and unique to the student involved. Our strong referral base assists parents and students finding the best match for support outside of school.

Learning-Differed Students

Learning-differed students who have been formally assessed and who are deemed supportable by our curriculum, with accommodations, are admitted to the school with an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). This contains agreements for parental support, faculty accommodations, and student strategies, along with citation of student’s gifts and challenges. The ILP is distributed to all faculty members working with the student, and faculty are asked to help with the accommodations. Periodic check-ins with the parent and student are initiated. When used, the student’s main tutor is asked to coordinate with the teachers on a regular basis. The program is overseen by the Guidance Counselors. This program works if the school has two or three identified students per grade, maximum. It is managed on a limited basis if the student, parent, teachers and counselors are working well together. Summerfield has no Special Education Coordinator, and additional support services are the expense of the parent.

For recent work done in this area, see Guidelines for Student and Program Assessment Handbook that gives detailed information on both Lower School and High School assessment practices.

Health Care Services

The school is able to provide basic health care and first aid to students and employees. Services are provided through the front desk, primarily by our receptionist. We have a small treatment
room with a well-equipped cabinet of first aid supplies. Each classroom in the Lower School has basic first aid supplies for minor injuries (band-aids, antiseptic wipes, latex gloves, etc.)

The science labs have additional supplies and an eyewash treatment center. There are also portable first aid kits available for field trips. The Athletic Department maintains its own first aid supplies for minor or sports injuries. It also provides kits for away-games.

The front office and high school office have student and staff emergency information on hand. This includes a contact number in case of emergency. This information allows us to contact parents immediately in case of an accident or emergency. In addition, we ask parents to complete a form alerting us to bee sting sensitivity, other allergic conditions, or any serious health concern. This information is conveyed to teachers at the start of the school year. If any student is required to take a prescription medication, this is kept in the treatment room, and we ask for written instructions.

The offices also maintain vaccination records or exemptions as required by state law, and work at the beginning of the school year to ensure that all safety forms are on file for each student. The school sends home information about communicable diseases such as chicken pox and strep throat or alerts parents to outbreaks of head lice or other health concerns.

The most common injuries are bumps, scrapes and bruises. Band-aids, ice packs and plenty of sympathy seem to be our most frequently used remedies. We have staff and faculty who are trained in first aid and CPR, and AED. If injuries appear to be more serious, parents are called and asked to take their children to a medical facility. In an emergency, our medical form gives the school permission to transport the child to a medical center, but unless the situation is extremely serious, we first attempt to reach the parent.

Faculty members are asked to fill out an accident report form in the event of any incident. These forms are kept on file in case they are needed for an insurance claim form. In addition, our receptionist keeps a log of visitors to the treatment room.

**Health Care Services Assessment**

**Strengths**

- We are able to provide first aid or to assess a more serious situation
- We are not a medical facility and, when in doubt, we seek another opinion
- We believe that we meet all state or federal requirements for school health care
- Our receptionists treat each child with love and gentleness
- We have well stocked treatment cabinets, adequate first aid supplies in classrooms, labs, and at sporting events
- We are located a few minutes away from an emergency treatment center
- Most teachers are currently certified in CPR and first aid
Challenges

- Some families choose to be exempt from immunization requirements as allowed by the state

Goals

- Continue to offer, at school, a regular course in basic first aid and CPR training for faculty and staff
- All Ninth Grade students will complete such a course as part of their graduation requirements

School Environment

Please refer to our school’s Parent Handbook, Faculty and Staff Handbook, and the High School Handbook in the addenda for codes of conduct for students and faculty. Also included in these sections are the guidelines for discipline, conflict resolution, and emergency procedures.