

Reaching Every Child: Developing a Middle School Advisory Program

Target Audience: K-12 educators and After School Professionals

Does your school utilize successful strategies for sustaining a socially and emotionally safe environment for students as they enter adolescence?

Why are Advisory programs important for schools to consider?

There is a growing awareness and body of research that supports the importance of Advisory programs in Middle and sometimes Elementary and/or High schools. Advisory programs promote students feeling “connected” to responsible and caring adults. They can become a platform for personalized and meaningful social, emotional and civic learning. Yet many schools experience challenges in designing and implementing effective Advisory program processes. Too often programs begin and falter and/or never become vehicles that support school connectedness and social, emotional and civic as well as intellectual learning.

Our Advisory design and implementation workshop series is based on the principles of child and adolescent development, prevention and social, emotional and civic education. Effective Advisory program ensure that every student is ‘connected’ to at least one caring and responsible adult. Students will learn key academic and social, emotional and civic skills and dispositions that will support school – and life – success.

How can this program help my school?

Young adolescents need structured opportunities to develop their senses of independence, responsibility and belonging. With strong connections and a sense that adults really care about them, students are more likely to avoid risky behaviors that may prevent them from fulfilling their dreams. Successful advisory programs can have a significant impact on individual students as well as on the school climate as a whole.

Our workshop series supports your school’s advisory planning team design an Advisory program that builds on your past efforts and the unique strengths and challenges of your school community. The design process is organized around the following key questions and goals: (1) developing a shared vision about the purpose, goals and outcomes for the program; (2) scheduling and frequency; (3) size and grouping; (4) curriculum and advisory content; (5) assessment; (6) advisory roles; (7) training and support for advisors and advisory program leaders; and, (8) Creating meaningful “bridges” between advisory goals and activities on the one hand and other school wide and/or academic goals.

What does the process like and how long will it take?

The development, design, and implementation process takes between 8 and 12 months depending on school readiness and current programming. The process begins with phone, email, and on-site consultation to develop a schedule and work plan that includes up to



seven on-site visits with a consultant. The outline that follows describes typical activities for each site visit. Visits will vary in length and frequency when districts are implementing advisory programs at several schools simultaneously.

Visit #1: Two days for focus groups with students, parents, and staff; a meeting with an advisory planning team; and a presentation to whole staff.

Note: If it is possible, we strongly recommend that the school use the Comprehensive School Climate Inventory to further a comprehensive needs assessment. These findings will not only provide the most comprehensive understanding of the schools strengths and challenges but will provide a potential focus for advisory activities that engage youth in meaningful ways.

Visit #2: Two days with advisory planning team and one day of meetings with faculty during prep periods

Visit #3: One day with advisory planning team and presentation to whole faculty

Visit #4: Two day training with all advisors

Periodic phone and email contact between our consultant and a designated “point person” in the school(s) will be an intermittent but ongoing part of the process. This will allow our consultants to understand successes and challenges and be helpful – from afar – in any and all ways that they can.

Follow-up visits: During the first year of advisory implementation, we will provide follow-up support, coaching, observation and feedback, and consultation to advisors and advisory program leaders. In addition, we will help you build district capacity to supervise, mentor, and train advisors and advisory team leaders. All planning team members and advisors will receive sets of Advisory activities and other resources that support the advisory model you have selected.

To find out how the *Developing An Advisory Program* can serve your school or district, call us at (212) 707-8799 or write to us info@csee.net