

Advisory Plus

Adolescents stand at a crucial intersection in their social, emotional and academic development, and they need coaching and support to navigate the complexities of school. Advisory is a fundamental structure for middle and high school students to develop key academic behaviors, skills, mindsets, and strategies. Success in school, college, career, and life is a result of students having the capacity to set goals, manage tasks, organize and keep track of materials, work collaboratively with others, advocate for themselves, and communicate effectively. Advisory is a strategic lever for students to increase academic achievement, school success, and emotional health and well-being. Supported by the training that is a hallmark of Advisory Plus, teachers and other staff members serve as advisors and play a vital role in creating a personalized environment where all students are valued, cared for, and encouraged. Effective advisors create a structured and safe place where their students reflect on their academic engagement and performance, share opinions, seek support, have opportunities to take responsibility for their academic and school program, and are inspired to hold a vision for their future. When necessary, advisors also make referrals for counseling, tutoring, or other services.

“Our teachers are hearing more and more from students who are struggling and having personal problems. Kids are turning to teachers and saying ‘I trust you, here’s what I’ve got going on in my life.’ We’ve transformed our culture – it’s more of an understanding culture for all our students.”

Steven Kane, principal of Bowie High School, Austin TX

BENEFITS OF ADVISORY PLUS

Advisors learn: 1) how to implement an academic advisement structure that incorporates systems, processes, and protocols to create an advisory culture where students become practiced in their ability to reflect on and analyze data related to their student profile; 2) use of rituals, routines, and research-based practices to create a community where peers support each other, grow together and learn from one another; and 3) facilitation techniques to increase engagement and participation.

Students learn: 1) ways to set and meet measurable academic, social, and behavioral goals; 2) strategies to monitor their week-to-week academic progress and achievement; and 3) how to draw upon habits of work, discipline, communication, participation, and mindsets that support efficacy.

Student outcomes include:

- **Increases** in: 1) a sense of belonging and membership in the school community that strengthens students’ attachment to school, 2) average daily attendance, and 3) self- and social-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.
- **Decreases** in: 1) absenteeism, 2) late arrivals to school and class, and 3) risky behaviors.

ADVISORY PLUS OPPORTUNITIES

In the effort to support all students to stay on track for graduation and develop healthy relationships among peers and with adults, many districts and schools' initial Advisory Plus goals focus on academic advisement and creating community. Some schools also elect to expand their advisory goals to develop thematic strands to meet students' immediate needs. These thematic strands can include conflict resolution, cooperation and communication, and bullying and harassment. Schools can organize advisory to play a central role to meet schoolwide needs such as case management, transitions to the next grade, and college and career planning. Engaging Schools works with an advisory leadership team to identify needs and develop the content for these sessions.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Engaging Schools supports a coordinated effort involving district and school leaders. We work with school leaders to identify and support an on-site leadership team to guide implementation efforts.

Engaging Schools offers a four-day Advisory Plus Institute for schools that have not yet begun advisories or are planning to restructure an existing program. This Institute is designed for the on-site leadership team, which is responsible for making decisions about advisory design and implementation. We work collaboratively to customize an approach using advisory standards focused on the following design elements: 1) goals and outcomes; 2) content and themes; 3) professional development; 4) materials and resources; 5) accountability; 6) links to the wider school context; and 7) building understanding, commitment and ownership. During implementation of Advisory Plus, the team assesses, monitors, and revises plans to ensure continuous learning and improvement.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The key to a successful advisory program is the amount and quality of training the advisors receive and the attitudes and beliefs they hold about advisory. Engaging Schools takes a collaborative and comprehensive approach to professional learning to support the growth and development of advisors. Engaging Schools co-creates a strategic professional development plan with the district and/or schools and offers the following services: 1) core advisory workshops; 2) advisory visitations to support implementation; 3) embedded coaching in grade level teams, departmental teams or as a staff; 4) web-based cohorts to troubleshoot and share successes.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Engaging Schools collaborates with districts and schools to assess the impact of the advisory program. Standardized and validated staff and student surveys, focus groups with staff and students, and observations provide data for analysis to support continuous improvement of the program and to evaluate how it is meeting the intermediate and long-term goals and target outcomes for advisory.

ENGAGING SCHOOLS PUBLICATIONS

Engaging Schools resources that align with Advisory Plus include:

- *The Advisory Guide: Designing and Implementing Effective Advisory Programs in Secondary Schools*
- *Getting Advisory Right: Tools for Supporting Effective Advisories*
- *The Advisory Library*

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ENGAGING SCHOOLS

Engaging Schools has provided high-quality services for districts and schools nationwide for over 30 years and has a proven track record of working with middle and high schools. Within the district and/or school, Engaging Schools identifies and leverages existing assets to address specific challenges. Engaging Schools' work includes a needs assessment, planning, consensus building, implementation, and preparation for sustainability.

To learn more about Advisory Plus for your school or district, connect with us at 800-370-2515, x32 or explore Engaging Schools' website, www.engagingschools.org

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