



Student-Led School Improvement Campaign



Challenge:

Finding Time for Students' Needs

Related Elements of Student Voice:

Relationship development

Fostering self advocacy

Appealing to Students' Lives/Interests

I. Research: Student Voice School Review

1. The Problem

After surveying students about issues within the school, a majority students surveyed said that the issue of needing help from a teacher so they can better understand the curriculum was of concern.

Survey

We surveyed students to see whether or not they believe a study hall period would help them get better grades in majority of their classes. The responses were as follows:

- 69% agreed with a study hall plan
- 21% said that they didn't think that would be enough to improve grades
- 10% said they didn't care

Interview/Meeting

We also met with the principal, Jillian Juman, to see how she could help make an advisory period a reality. We met to discuss our plan for the schedule, and learned that administration was looking to institute something similar. We began brainstorming how to adjust the schedule to fit an advisory program. We also began discussing how this could benefit our school.

Focus Group

A number of student leaders were involved in the creation of our proposed schedule. Our focus group included 4 boys and 6 girls: 2 freshman, 2 sophomore, 3 juniors, and 1 senior.

2. At the Root

Element #1: Fostering Self-Advocacy

Students suggested that they were lacking in their learning because they didn't have time to meet with teachers outside of classes. This became clear through both student surveys and focus groups. The SVC believes that meeting with teachers will help to foster self-advocacy and encourage students to take initiative to be responsible for their own learning.

Element #2: Relationship Development

Teachers and students have generally well-developed relationships. One issue, however, is with the administration according to a focus group of 2 teachers and 3 students. An advisory program would allow for teachers and student to deepen their relationships, and could also provide students with the opportunity to understand administrative directives.

Element #3: Appealing to Students' Lives and Interests

The IB Learner Profile demands that academics be connected to real life. Our focus group discussed real world experiences and school connections to extend our knowledge and understanding. For example, for one of our projects in Trigonometry we had to create a rollercoaster using practical applications of sine, cosine, and tangent to create a rollercoaster for an amusement park in Shanghai. This project connected the real world experience to the academic. An advisory period could allow for students to receive help during school, rather than staying late, beyond contracted hours.

3. What's Already Being Done About It

- Several meetings with the principal have already taken place to discuss potential schedule changes. One challenge here is that to change the daily schedule to allow for an advisory period would require no fewer than three SBOs.
- School already has an advisory for bonding, but it meets infrequently at best. As a consequence, little academic help can realistically be offered. Similarly, little socio-emotional guidance is offered.

4. What Students Think We Should Do About It

- Since we already have homeroom for 50 minutes per week, we see that time can be more productively used.
- Students believe that they need more teacher-student time.
- Time should be used for both academic aid and socio-emotional aid.
- They strongly agreed and said that if the advisory were to start that it will solve many issues, such as low Regents scores and may also relieve tensions between students.

II. ACTION PLAN OUTLINE

1. **Name Your Campaign:** International starting up Study Hall/Advisory

2. The BIG Idea

Many students needed help from teachers outside the regularly scheduled school day. The way that this issue came about was through a change from zero period to a 10 minute homeroom each day. Students felt a lack of extra help as a result and started to struggle because the extra help time was no longer there for students to rely on. The creation of an advisory/study hall would benefit not only students but also teachers because they would have time to build relationships with the students and also find out what they need individually for their learning.

3. How Campaign Will Strengthen

Element #1: Fostering Advocacy

Students will be able to manage their own time and figure out what it is they need to do for school. Advisory/study hall will allow the students to be more independent and set goals for themselves. With advisory/study hall students would know that they did not have to worry too much about falling behind because teachers would be available to offer the help necessary to get students to standard.

Element #2: Relationship Development

Students will manage to simultaneously be constructive with each other and focus on school. Many students get very distracted easily and do not have time to dedicate their time to focus in school. An advisory/study hall will allow students to actually sit in a room and get their work done. This will lead to higher grades and a higher interest in learning.

Element #3 Appealing to Students Lives and Interests

Students will be able to use this time to invest in themselves and their work. Students will know that their work is important and feel eager to do better because advisory/study hall motivated them to do better and follow their goals.

4. How Campaign Will Learn From/Build On What Has Already Been Done

- 10 minute homerooms have been put together already. The SVC would see them used as an advisory twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, one toward the beginning of the week so that students can check in and one at the end so students can go over any assignments they didn't complete and anything they did not understand.
- Principal agrees on plan, in principle. The principal was very interested and also created a plan to combine her idea of an advisory/study hall with ours. Ms. Juman added on an emotional component because students need an adult that they can trust in the building because that will decrease conflict.

5. Measuring Progress

WHAT We're Measuring

Finding time for an Advisory/Study Hall

Relationship Development

Fostering Advocacy

Appealing to Students Lives and Interests

HOW We're Measuring

Tracking key steps, increased meaningful time

Survey

Survey

Survey

6. Steps to LAUNCH Campaign

- 1.) Continue having meeting with our principal to talk about the SBO's and the plans for next year and the small details of teachers having to create a lesson plan and the hallway passes during the advisory time.
- 2.) Have our trial period to see how we can adjust the schedule. The trial will be very beneficial because from there we can tell what is working and what is not. We may need to make some changes if the time is not helping students academically. We believe that after time students will get used to the schedule changes and we would not have to have as many rules because students will be aware that the advisory time is designed for them to succeed and catch up.
- 3.) Make a final decision on what to do. We are still trying to figure out whether to have the advisory/study hall on one day for 50 minutes or two for 25 each because teachers would have to agree on the schedule. Our goal is to have two days so that students can actually have time and have a day in the beginning of the week and then at the end of the week.

7. Steps to ORBIT the Campaign

- 1.) We need to determine the schedule changes and the teachers have to agree (Focus groups with students and two teachers could determine what plan will most/all teachers agree with. With this feedback we can adjust some of the schedule changes).
- 2.) Keeping track of the survey (We can sit with the grade team leader and discuss how the survey is going. So far 8 said we should have advisory and 4 said we should just keep the 10 minute homeroom, which is a good sign because more teachers so far are for creating an advisory). This feedback is very important because it is bringing us closer to our goal which is having a set advisory/study hall, which we find very important because this is one way for all our peers to succeed.

III. Outcomes

1. Tracking Progress

As of the beginning of May, as previously stated, the principal has agreed to the proposal (at least in theory), the student focus group is on board, and the staff is preparing to vote on the three SBOs required to alter the schedule. If all goes well, the advisory period will be in place by the start of next year.

Key Developments:

- Progress towards passing 3 SBO'S: One passed regarding schedule changes necessary for study hall next year.
- Meetings with principal to check on what teachers are agreeing on.
- Trial period: We are still trying to get principal to agree to the changes in schedule, and are advocating for a trial of the twice-a-week advisory period.
- Weekly check in with grade team leaders to see what other teachers think about the change for the following year. This will allow us to advocate with specific teachers.

2. Reflections

What Worked:

- So far we have had many meetings with our principal
- Focus groups (teachers + students + admin): ideas for schedule changes
- Setting aside time to work after school and during lunch
- Mr. Isakson communicated w/ grade leaders and shared back w/ us
- Reminding teachers that the change will benefit the students

What Didn't Work:

- Lack of communication with changes and SBOs: didn't get updates
- Waiting for SBO process; should have communicated w/ teachers about importance

3. Next Steps

- First plan: Combining homeroom (50 minutes) and having advisory for 25 minutes each twice a week.
- Second plan: Having a half day once a week and using the remaining time for advisory
- Third plan: During lunch, have an advisory with most/all teachers available.
- Fourth plan: Shorter periods and a 15 minute advisory twice a week.

Our next steps will be:

- 1.) Waiting the project to start next year
- 2.) Take surveys to see how the students like this/modify plans
- 3.) Check in on progress more often
- 4.) Advisory Trial/Pilot
- 5.) Include students in school emails regarding decisions
- 6.) Include students in SBO process
- 7.) Student council to circulate/advocate/share importance of this work

APPENDIX

Advisory/Study Hall Proposal

After speaking with many students about the need for an academic advisory period, the SVC has developed the following proposal for adjusting the current schedule. This proposal takes the existing 50 minutes allotted for homeroom and turns that time into two 25 minute periods during the week. Additionally, each schedule allows for a three minute passing period.

Schedule A – Monday, Wednesday, Friday

1	8:10	8:55
2	8:58	9:44
3	9:47	10:33
4	10:36	11:22
5	11:25	12:05
6	12:08	12:53
7	12:56	1:42
8	1:45	2:30

This schedule allows for classes which are, for the most part, 45 minutes long, with a 3 minute passing period in between each period.

Schedule B – Tuesday, Thursday

1	8:10	8:51
2	8:54	9:35
3	9:38	10:19
4	10:22	11:03
Adv.	11:06	11:31
5	11:34	12:15
6	12:18	12:59
7	1:02	1:42
8	1:45	2:30

This schedule allows for classes which are, for the most part, 41 minutes long.

The SVC recommends that these advisory/study hall periods be largely unstructured time, allowing for students to seek assistance as necessary. Students would check in with their teacher, present a pass written by the teacher they are going to see, and then move to said teacher's room. Students would stay with that teacher for the remainder of the period. Students who remain can use the time to work on course work for other classes, complete reading, or work on projects. This period could also be used for announcements, and to hand out notifications to students. Further, it would make for an ideal period during which students could hold grade-level town halls facilitated by students. The SVC also recommends that study hall classes be made up of mixed-grade level students who would cycle through together. This could allow for students to get to know students from other grades and would facilitate community as students move through their high school experience together.