

Berkeley High School Advisory Program Proposal – Option 2

In the Berkeley High School WASC Action Plan, one of the agreed upon action activities is the creation of a school wide advisory program for all students. The following document is a modification of the proposal made by the School Design Team to School Governance Council regarding implementation of the Advisory Program for SY 2009-2010. The revisions are based on community feedback.

Advisory Program Goals and Outcomes

Goals

1. To personalize the BHS experience by providing a safe, caring, and cooperative community that evolves over four years.
2. To empower students to take responsibility and be their own advocates.
3. To develop habits of successful engaged students, and community members.
4. To provide students information and guidance regarding academic progress, policies, resources, opportunities, activities, etc.
5. To provide every student with an adult advocate and peer support.
6. To direct students to the appropriate academic assistance.
7. To provide the key delivery point for information about our college going culture.

Outcomes

1. To help students create a vision for their future by developing a five year academic plan by their junior year that will plan through graduation and into postsecondary education.
2. Students will understand how to access support services, set personal and academic goals and develop a plan to monitor and achieve their goals.
3. Students will demonstrate skills to manage conflict in a positive and productive manner.
4. Students will experience an adult advocate who knows and cares about them and can strategize ways to improve their success.
5. Students will be their own advocate and learn to take responsibility for their own education.
6. Students will work together to develop a community of peers to support their personal and academic goals.
7. Students, on a prearranged basis, will have some time during the advisory period to meet with subject area teachers to help improve their academic performance in subject area classes.

Organization of the Advisory

- Advisories will be 25 minutes in length and will meet twice a week. Another option would be to meet 45 minutes in length once a week.
- The groups will be composed of only students from each of the separate Small Learning Communities. Teacher advisors will be from that Small Learning Community or from other departmental faculty members assigned to that Small Learning Community.
- Advisors will include all certificated staff (teachers, librarians, counselors and administrators)
- Advisories will include an equal number (plus or minus 1 or 2 students) of 9th – 12th grade students.
- Students will stay with the same advisor for all 4 years at BHS, if possible. The school will develop a process to change advisors when a solution cannot be developed. Another option could be grade level advisories where 4 advisory groups form a team to represent

all four grade levels. Counselors will be in charge of this process and placement of students in advisory groups.

- Advisory groups will be between 19 and 20 students in size.
- Students will be given a pass or a fail grade for advisory. In order to pass advisory the students must attend and participate in the advisory meetings. Passing advisory will be a graduation requirement. As with any other class, BHS attendance policy will be in effect.
- Students, on a prearranged basis, will occasionally have the opportunity during advisory to meet with their subject area teachers for academic intervention.

Advisory Program Content

A detailed curriculum guide for the first two years of advisory will be developed for advisors to use. A more general curriculum outline will be developed for years 3 and 4. The final year three and four curriculums will be developed following the evaluation of year 1. The curriculum development will be led by the Professional Development Coordinator, and a volunteer teacher committee. Counselors will work to support the development of curriculum for advisories. Professional Development team leaders will help support their team to implement advisories. Information on advisees will be given to advisors at the beginning of the school year. Attendance, grade, and discipline information will be given to the advisor as available throughout the year.

Role of the Advisor

The advisor should...

- Provide the key access point for student support for academic success.
- Implement the advisory curriculum
- Check in individually with each advisee on a regular basis
- Help students access services when they have a pressing issue or crisis
- Provide a secure space for advisees
- Communicate as needed with advisees' parents (telephone, phone, mail, or email)
- Meet advisees' parents, as appropriate, during the school year. Advisors will be compensated for optional summer home visits. Counselors will coordinate of placement in advisory and the summer home visit process.
- Refer advisees to counselors and/or the administrator for major academic, counseling, and guidance concerns
- Review advisees' previous academic and guidance records at least once during the fall and once during the spring semesters
- Serve as advisees' advocate in parent conferences and disciplinary matters (when available)
- Support advisees' annual course selections during the spring
- Ask for support from colleagues when needed
- Remain professional at all times (use discretion when disclosing personal experiences)

The advisor should not...

- Try to be "friends" with their advisees (it's not about being "liked")
- Try to "solve" students problems
- See themselves as a replacement for guidance counselors, social workers, parents, school nurses, or psychologists
- Provide extensive academic or social counseling and guidance
- Be seen as a disciplinarian for incidents outside of their class
- Allow advisory time to be used for students to "talk about teachers/staff" or gossip about other students

- Use advisory to express *their* personal opinion about school policies, procedures, or colleagues

