

# ADVISORY CONNECTION

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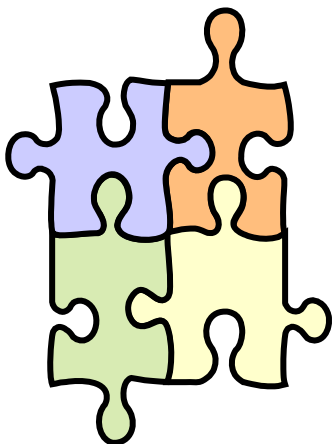
*What If..*

*Advisories in PGCPSS*

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**Resources available and attached to this issue:**

- Retracing Your Steps
- Workshop Packet
- ESR Workshop Power-Point



**WHAT IF...**

- Every student in our schools knew that someone – a staff member – really cared about him/her?
- All students had educational, career and personal goals toward which they were working and could see their courses as useful in reaching these goals?
- All parents personally knew someone at school that they could call – who really knew their child – and how well they were doing?
- All school staff had the opportunity to develop close connections and mentoring relationships with a small group of students throughout their middle/high school years?



These “what ifs”, if realized, could make school a more rewarding place for everyone.

Research shows that a positive culture within a school can connect students to learning. Such things as a safe and respectful environment, supportive and personalized learning experiences, and personal relationships allow students to develop a connection with the school and attain educational success. They can also help reduce at-risk behaviors and drop-outs.

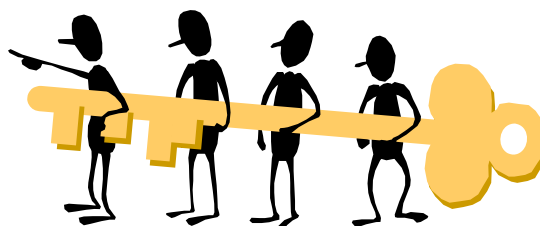
An effective advisory program can provide these elements and allow students to succeed. “Students need to feel safe first (both physically and psychologically), feel like they belong, feel respected, and feel cared about to be successful in school.” *The Advisory Guide*

## ADVISORIES IN PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Prince George’s County Public Schools Advisory programs are designed to recognize the unique needs, choices, and challenges of all students and provide every student with an adult advocate who will support their needs, interests, and aspirations, and assist them to achieve academic and personal success throughout their high school experience. Advisory groups should meet frequently in small-group settings that deviate from the traditional classroom setting. Informal discussions should afford students opportunities for academic guidance and support, deeper exposure to educational and career options, and ongoing dialogue to foster each student’s social and emotional growth. Finally, advisories will provide students with opportunities for self-determination and help them make connections within their school communities.

**So Why Do We Have Advisories?**

- Our students need direction.
- Our students need connections.
- Our students need stability.

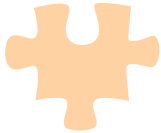




Prince George's County  
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### Five Dimensions of Successful Advisory Programs

- A state purpose
- Thoughtful organization
- Relevant Advisory Content
- Ongoing Management
- Strong Leadership



Please share your advisory stories, successes and best practices for future issues.

## KUDOS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Program Specialist, Tracy Walls has been visiting schools throughout the county to assess advisory programs and to provide support and recommendations to ensure effective, successful programs. While several schools have made considerable efforts to get advisories off to a good start, a few schools deserve special recognition for their valiant efforts and success.

- Frederick Douglass - time and effort to establish advisories evident; positive, supportive and cooperative climate throughout school and from key players
- Friendly - activities well organized and distributed to staff in timely manner
- Laurel - routines and frequency of advisories well established and implemented

An effective advisor will:

- facilitate advisory sessions (not lecture).
- get to know each student in the group.
- get to know the parents of advisees.
- foster communication between home and school.
- develop feelings of trust and caring within the advisory group.
- help students develop ownership of the program.
- be a good listener.
- show a sense of humor.
- be positive.
- be patient.
- have fun.

## EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (ESR) CONDUCTS ADVISORY WORKSHOP

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) helps educators create safe, caring, respectful, and productive learning environments. ESR also helps educators work with young people to develop the social skills, emotional competencies, and qualities of character they need to succeed in school and become contributing members of their communities. On October 28, 2008, ESR conducted Part

I of an Advisory Workshop for Prince George's County high schools. Representatives from high schools throughout the county participated in this informative and interactive workshop and gained strategies to improve advisories at their schools. Participants received copies of *The Advisory Guide* and learned about factors that contribute to successful advisory programs. Advisory coor-

dinators and other representatives from each school worked together to problem solve how to address some of the challenges of implementing an effective advisory program.

Part II of the workshop will be held on December 2, 2008, from 8:30-3:30 pm at Largo High School.

## ADVISORY RESOURCES & WEBSITES

**CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS:** <http://intranet.cps.k12.il.us/Lessons/Advisory/>. This site provides an overview of Chicago's citywide advisory program and links to their grade-level advisory curriculum. Good lesson ideas are available through these links.

**EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:** <http://www.esrnational.org>. This site also offers an excellent reference, *The Advisory Guide*, for those interested in implementing an advisory program.

**THE PRINCIPALS' PARTNERSHIP.** Sponsored by Union Pacific Foundation: <http://www.principalspartnership.com/HSadvisory.pdf>. This site represents the summary of research findings and conclusions on high school advisories. It also provides information on the structure of advisories and considerations that schools planning to implement advisories should take into account. Relevant links are also provided.

**THE EDUCATION ALLIANCE** at Brown University: [http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/changing\\_systems/power\\_of\\_advisories/the\\_power.pdf](http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/changing_systems/power_of_advisories/the_power.pdf). This site provides *The Power of Advisories* guidebook which helps high school change teams conduct workshops for school staff on setting up a school-wide advisory program.