



# PREPARE FOR POSSIBILITY

Dance, Vocal and Instrumental Music, Traditional and Digital Visual Art, Creative Writing, and Acting are a part of every student's schedule – ART EVERY DAY. Our extensive arts program is integrated into our solid academic curriculum. The Arts Academy in the Woods is chartered by the Macomb Intermediate School District's Board of Education

## Advisory Academic Check in Procedure

### Background

Information adapted from [\*Community Matters: A Facing History and Ourselves Approach to Advisory\*](#)

Relationships are the primary source of authority. The primary source of authority comes from advisor relationships with their advisees— showing they care, getting to know them as individuals, becoming a trusted adult. Most advisories are not graded or offer only a small portion of a credit, so advisees participate because they have a voice in what is happening, get academic and emotional support, and learn about themselves and others, not because there are threats of low grades and non-credit. As teachers and administrators take on the role of advisor, it is important for the adults to build trusting relationships with their advisees while at the same time establishing and maintaining professional boundaries.

### Mini-Conference

#### The Goal of Mini-Conferences in Advisory

One key reason for implementing a school-wide advisory program is to provide time and space for mini-conferencing between advisors and individual advisees on a regular basis. Advisees can benefit from individualized conversations with an adult in the building who may or may not be their teacher and who has a good sense of the whole student— their academic program, strengths, areas for growth, personal interests, and home life. These short one-to-one conversations help advisees develop a growth mindset, self-management skills (reflecting on and improving learning habits), and interpersonal skills (self-advocacy with teachers). They also offer an opportunity to address equity issues— what some advisees might have noted earlier as “skills or moves or tricks that some kids know how to do to be successful at school” but that are a mystery to other students.



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Since advisors focus on the advisee as a whole, not how they are doing in just one class, they might notice slumps sooner than specific academic teachers might notice them, hear about stress building up or complications with friends or at home, or be able to help advisees connect what they are learning to a passion they have mentioned in advisory. Mini-conferencing also fosters a greater sense of connection between each advisee and their advisor—a key protective factor for school success and healthy development. For more information about how to implement mini-conferences, suggested activities, and goal-setting templates, we recommend Rachel Poliner and Carol Miller Lieber’s *The Advisory Guide: Designing and Implementing Effective Advisory Programs in Secondary Schools*.



## Best Practices for Mini-Conferences

- Sit next to the advisee or across a corner of a desk (a partnership position), not directly across (an opposition position).
- Introduce to the whole group a template that they will use repeatedly. Review or briefly brainstorm the kinds of responses that fit each prompt.
- Set SMART goals. If your advisees do not have experience setting SMART goals, you can provide models. For example, "Getting a better grade in math" or "Arriving to first period on time" are too vague. A more specific and time-bound version of the first goal could be "For the next three weeks, I will meet with my math teacher on Tuesdays for 30 minutes during my free period. I will write the meeting in my planner and set a reminder on my phone."
- Prepare coaching questions to help advisees understand their own learning process. What steps have you tried? What was the impact? What else could you try? If advisees need to ask a teacher for an extension or a retest, have them role-play their request with you first. Then offer suggestions of your own.

Students are able to view their current grades and attendance in Unified Classroom. Teachers can view this information using the Quick Look Up tool.

In Unified Classroom select a class at the top of the screen. Then select Student on the left side of the screen and choose a specific student by clicking the box with their picture. Select View Detail from the left side of the black box. Select Quick Links from the white bar at the top of the page. Select QLU – Traditional from the options. (QLU is Quick Look Up.)

From the Quick Look Up screen, you can see current attendance and grades. You can click on the current grade (in blue) for each class to see individual assignments. (In many classes, there will be enough information and links in the description {click view next to the assignment} for the kid to do the work in the advisory class.) Then you can assist a student through the conference process template below.



Name:

Date:

## Mini-Conference Template

a) Looking at your current grades and attendance in Unified Classroom, what concerns do you have? (Grades, attendance, other)

b) Based on that concern, what class would you like to focus our discussion on today?

c) Are there any assignments that you have completed or almost completed that you can turn in right away? Make a list of those

d) Are there any exams, quizzes, or projects that you could talk to your teacher about completing? Make a list of those

e) Set a SMART goal for the next week: