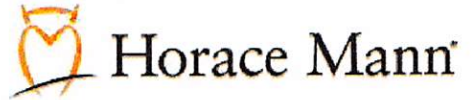


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# Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

## Star of Innovation Award Application Form

School Name South View Middle School Grade Levels 6-8  
Name of School District Edina ISD 273  
Name of Principal Patricia Pettis  
Application Submitted By Patricia Pettis  
School Street Address 4725 South View Lane  
City, Zip Edina, MN 55424  
Telephone Number 952-848-3799  
MASSP Division Hennepin  
Name of Program School wide Multiage Advisory Program

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet/s of paper.

- Description of the program.
- How has it impacted your school?
- What difficulties did you encounter in its implementation?
- What issue/s might another school encounter in replicating this program?
- Do you have any data to show the impact of this program? If so, please share it with us.

Applications must be submitted to MASSP offices by March 1.

PHONE: 612-361-1510 • FAX: 612-361-6340  
MASSP • 2 Pine Tree Drive • Suite 380 • Arden Hills, MN 55112

Questions? Please contact:  
Bob Driver, Executive Director  
612-361-6159

## **School Wide Multiage Advisory Program, South View Middle School**

When the pandemic hit in 2020, we quickly realized how vital connections were for our learners. Entering the fall of 2020, there was an urgency around making sure all learners would be connected to a teacher as some would be in person, some hybrid, and others fully online. Our focus would be on strengthening our advisory program to ensure this connection. We told our staff they were responsible for not only connecting, but also monitoring and supporting their 18-20 learners in advisory. In doing so, all teachers knew that another teacher had the other 130 learners in their classes. Our goals for our new advisory programming centered around building agency and a sense of belonging for all learners. We define agency as, developing the capacity to prioritize and carry out plans, communicate and make informed decisions based on learning and feedback. And belonging is the extent to which an individual feels appreciated, valued, accepted, and treated fairly. At the end of the third year of implementation, our school's belonging scores on the panorama survey put us in the 99% nationally and our MCA math scores showed triple the expected growth. Here is how we did it.

The first thing our leadership team did was form a task force, creating the structure for this continuous improvement. Four teachers that had experience with advisory and had a passion for the work. This was the start of us insources vs outsources for our advisory programming. The task force meets weekly to plan, they also get a full work day in the fall, winter and some time in the summer. Together the task force has created the daily plans for advisory, a presentation for all advisors to use, any materials needed for advisory, and a "Learner Story".

Through research, trial and error, and practice, the task force landed on an advisory schedule that is based on building agency and a sense of belonging. Mondays, learners plan and prioritize for the week, Tuesday is time for IXL, Wednesday and Thursdays are check and connect time (advisors check on grades with individual learners, while all other learners are connecting with peers, playing games, coloring, hanging out, device free), and Friday we have extended time in advisory to facilitate community building circles (specific SEL work). Learners use their "Learner Story", a google presentation, to track and reflect on their identity, sense of belonging, agency, plan and prioritizing, current reality/desired reality, goal setting, and more. Learners engage with their learner stories each week. The Learner Story is also the tool for learners to explain their learning journey to families in learner led conferences.

This weekly structure is carried out by advisors all using the same slide show. This consistent schedule, expectation to all use the same slide show/activities, allows for all learners to have shared experiences. We no longer have the "educational" lottery where some learners have a more positive experience than others based on the heroic efforts of some teachers. Advisory is the one thing we are all doing in unison across the entire building, even as the principal I run an advisory (and it is one of my favorite parts of the day). This platform of shared messaging in advisory allows us to train our teachers along with our learners. We develop common language and instructional practices by implementing them in our advisory programming. We have shaped our school culture through the common experience of advisory.

In the first few years of this new advisory model, where we were all following the same plans, we tried to put too many things into the week. Advisors couldn't get through all of the information and there was not enough time for learners to just connect with one another. Another challenge was some advisors would struggle with lack of engagement or behavior concerns. Any learner that is in a student leadership group, was not in regular advisory, leaving some advisories with a lack of student leaders. The solution to these challenges was simplifying our daily routines and plans and moving to the multiage advisory structure.

We have many structures designed to create a sense of belonging, but ultimately learners need opportunities to be connected to and validated by their fellow peers. Advisory is the perfect opportunity for learners to feel like they belong because of peer acceptance. Moving to the multiage advisory structure had a positive impact on our entire school culture. Multi age advisory provides space for students to build deeper relationships with each other and their advisor because of having extended time with each other from one year to the next. There is an increase in learner achievement because advisors will strengthen connections with caretakers and learners. In addition, there are lower behavioral issues because the older learners take on the role of supporting and mentoring the younger students, and the younger learners enjoy learning from the older ones. This leads to more leadership opportunities for all leaders. Our 8th graders are stepping up to the call to look after the 6th and 7th graders, and our 6th and 7th graders report liking their "8th grade" friends looking after them.

One of the ways we got all staff on board with multiage advisory was having three teachers pilot it for a year, and then inviting all other staff members on learning walks. We also collected data from the learners that were in multiage advisor compared to learners that were not. The data from the multiage learners was much more positive than the data collected from grade pure advisories. All of our advisories are part of triads, so when needed we can hold grade pure advisories where one teacher takes all the 6th graders, one takes the 7th graders, and another takes the 8th. This works perfectly for registration, field trips, and other grade specific activities done in advisory.

Soon we will take the panorama survey once more, we expect our belonging scores for students and staff to remain high. Our behavior referrals are down and we know this is directly tied to the ongoing and relevant SEL work we do in advisory. During our Friday circles we cover topics like self-regulation, conflict resolution, courage, inclusion, and so many more topics. Because we insource our advisory work, the task force plans for circles that are responsive to our school needs. We do not follow a packaged curriculum, but rather adjust our discussions and activities to the needs of our learners.

I would offer the suggestions for any school trying to implement a robust and purposeful advisory program to first ground in their purpose. Ours was to build agency and belonging. Next, create the structures to compel the outcomes desired. A task force, a structure that creates a consistent experience for all, and one that is responsive to the needs of the building. A tool that guides learners and teachers in the process, such as a shared advisory presentation and a learner story. And one that is developmentally appropriate for your age group. For the middle

level one that lets learners explore and ponder, "Who am I, where do I belong, and what do I have to offer?" Our advisory program has become the heart of our school, a place where all feel like they belong and can contribute.

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