

Sophomore Advisory Period/Tutorial

*Northridge High School
Layton, Utah*

Parents, staff, and members of the Community Council put their heads together last year to help 1,900 tenth through twelfth grade students at Northridge High School connect outside of the classroom. Their solution, after months of deliberation, was to create a new guidance program—the Sophomore Advisory and Tutorial Period.

The school's Action Team for Partnership (ATP) began working on the idea for an advisory period in the spring of 2007 when they noticed that many sophomores at Northridge were having a hard time adjusting to the new high school. Test scores for this group showed room for improvement, and administrators were determined to raise the bar for success!

Northridge's administrators, Professional Learning Community lead teachers, faculty members, and parents met together and decided that sophomore students needed extra advising time. They formed two committees: an advisory committee to research different models for advising students across the country and an intervention committee to develop a set of "interventions" to help struggling students succeed academically and behaviorally during their transition into the tenth grade.

After starting their research, the ATP realized that students in all three of the school's grade levels—10, 11, and 12—could benefit from an advisory period. This period allowed sophomores to gain support for their high school transition, while upperclassmen received guidance and tutoring in various academic subjects.

Adding an extra period in the school day is no easy feat! The ATP found that they could add the advisory and tutorial period to the school day by shortening the walk-time between classes. Sophomores attended advisory twice a week and on the other three days joined upperclassmen in the tutorial period.

Prior to implementing the Sophomore Advisory Period, the school brought the plan

to the Community Council for its input and endorsement. The Council shared the proposal with the community. Parents provided input and after several months of discussion and deliberation, the extra period was approved.

School staff and administrators found that the extra period had a significant impact on the student body. Counselors found that students completed more homework on time, and teachers believed that they could assign less homework because the students attended the tutorials.

"I could ask my math teacher questions and she would help me. It was better because I didn't have to stay after school for help," one student said.

"The fact that there was time for students to engage in 'one on one' time was a benefit. The student and teacher relationship was strengthened. It was time well spent," an administrator added.

The school plans to continue the advisory period next year with a few changes. They hope to offer multiple orientations throughout the year to accommodate a large population of mobile students who enroll after the start of the school year. The ATP also plans to appoint a faculty liaison to facilitate communication with the many stakeholders who support the activity.

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