Inspiring Boys, Inspiring Teachers

Academic Advising and Professional Development
Boys and Mentors

- Children must have positive role models and mentors to excel.
- Boys react well to consistency.
- Routines reinforce good practices and behaviors.
- Academic advising is a key component of a boys-school education.
Advising Programs

Many are handled through psychological-counseling or college-counseling programs.

Some are formalized; others are informal.

Class advising is a frequent pattern.

Often, advisors follow a class along until graduation.
Advising at Montgomery Bell Academy

- Years of haphazard assignments and infrequent/irregular meetings with unclear purposes.

- New high-school program instituted in fall, 2004, that continues to be refined and strengthened.

- The junior-school program is still handled though 1st-period classes because of middle-school best practices.
MBA Advisory Groups

- Mixed group of 9th – 12th graders
- Generally 6 – 10 in groups
- Meets from 7:50 – 8 a.m. each morning
- The advisor stays with students all four years of high school.
- Advisors are both faculty and staff members (First-year teachers are not assigned groups.)
Purposes of the Advisory

- Daily announcements
- Social awareness topics
- Academic advising (meetings with advisees at the end of each marking period)
- Course pre-registration – approval and denial of academic programs
By-Products of the System

- Service projects handled by the advisory
- Social gatherings of advisories outside of the school day
- “Big Brother/Little Brother” system and peer advising
Additional Advisor Functions

- The first point of contact to resolve student issues
- The student’s advocate in discipline hearings and Honor Council issues
- First contact for academic, extracurricular, athletic, and college advising (This means that the advisor must be well versed in all of these areas.)
- End-of-year advisory comments (used by College Counseling on a regular basis)
Advisor Assignments

Made by Director of Counseling

Assisted by Heads of the Junior and High Schools

Recommendations are sometimes made by coaches, previous teachers, or others who are close to the boys.

Changes may be made by a boy’s request at the end of the school year.
Challenges and Benefits

- Advisors must buy into the boys and the total school program completely.
- Involvement with the boys often transfers to families, too. Advisors have to deal with both the good and the bad; it’s a terrific contact point for the school in all issues.
What People Are Saying…

“I can't remember if I told you this, but I could have never survived all of my struggles at MBA without you, and I don't know if I'll ever be able to thank you enough for that.”

“My transition to MBA was rocky. I do not know how I would have made the adjustment without my advisor. She was the constant in my hectic life that gave me the support I needed to succeed.”
“I received an acknowledgement card for your memorial donation. Your constant care and attention to our family are so very comforting to us right now.”

“You don't know me - I'm Will's grandmother; we have never met, but you are very much a PRESENCE in our lives. Will speaks of you with respect and admiration, and you have been a constant and positive influence during the course of his time at MBA. As mentor, advisor, instructor, and friend, you have strongly influenced his searching and agile mind in productive ways.”
“I am so grateful that my son had the opportunity to be in your advisory. There were several times that I know he leaned on you for support and understanding, but I’m also aware and most thankful for all the times it happened and I never heard about it.”
Connecting the Professional Development Piece:

The Center for Teaching Excellence
CTE Luncheons

- Generally 6 *per* year
- Held during all lunch periods
- Professional development points given for attendance – 1/16 Continuing Education Unit *per* session
- Topics include all issues of school life
- Engaging interdisciplinary discussions
- Sessions are handled by administration, academic departments, and staff.
Recent Topics

- Creativity in the Classroom
- Innovative ways of mathematics instruction
- How to teach respect
- Collegiality
- Summer professional development opportunities
- Working with College Counseling
Using Whipple Hill (MBA’s school-information system)

Library resources and issues of academic freedom

MBA’s Honor Council
MBA’s CTE Blog

CTE Blog