

Empowering Success: Implementing the Achievement Academy Model



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As dedicated school administrators, our foremost mission is to cultivate an environment where every student not only succeeds academically but also thrives personally. In response to the district's eligibility policy, we recognized the need for a proactive and restorative approach to support students facing academic and behavioral challenges. Thus, the achievement academy was established, representing a transformative initiative designed to provide targeted academic and behavioral assistance, ensuring every student can overcome obstacles and graduate with the skills and confidence essential for future success.

UNDERSTANDING THE ACHIEVEMENT ACADEMY

The achievement academy was designed to replace the building eligibility committee. It operates under the guidance of a dedicated committee composed of academic, behavior, and English as a new language (ENL) advisors, in addition to a guidance counselor. This collaborative structure ensures a holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing the diverse challenges faced by students, encompassing both academic and behavioral dimensions. The committee's combined expertise allows for a thorough examination of individual student needs, fostering an environment where support is tailored to each student's unique circumstances.

Within the achievement academy, distinct roles and responsibilities are assigned to various advisors, each contributing to the program's success:

- The advising administrator takes on a pivotal role, overseeing the entirety of the achievement academy. This includes managing academic and discipline lists, updating spreadsheets, and coordinating various activities that contribute to the program's efficacy.
- Academic advisors play a crucial role in engaging with students experiencing academic struggles. They create personalized success plans, offering ongoing support to ensure students can overcome academic challenges and achieve their goals.
- Behavioral advisors focus on students grappling with disciplinary issues. They develop improvement plans, aiming to guide students toward positive behavioral change. Additionally, they conduct monthly Falcon leaders group meetings, fostering a community where students can discuss and implement restorative practices.
- The ENL advisors provide specialized support for ENL students. This includes translating communications and facilitating ENL ambassador group meetings, creating an inclusive space for ENL students to address both academic and language-related challenges.

- The guidance counselor collaborates closely with advisors, offering assistance in academic matters. Their role extends to ensuring seniors meet graduation requirements and active participation in Falcon and ENL leader meetings, contributing to the overall success of the program.

This coordinated effort among advisors within the achievement academy not only addresses immediate concerns but also contributes to the long-term success and well-being of the students involved.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ADVISOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Integral to the achievement academy's commitment to student well-being is the completion of a 15-hour restorative practices professional development (PD) course by each of its members. This course is purposefully designed to cultivate healthy relationships, promote academic success, and instill positive discipline strategies. Recognizing the significance of restorative practices in creating safe and supportive learning environments, the course delves into essential topics.

During the course, advisors within the achievement academy engage in a comprehensive exploration of restorative practices, delving into fundamental questions such as, "What is restorative practice?" This foundational understanding establishes the philosophy and principles that underpin the approach, providing advisors with the conceptual framework necessary for effective implementation. Additionally, the course addresses the "Why should we implement restorative practices?" question, ensuring advisors gain a comprehensive understanding of the myriad benefits and positive impacts restorative practices can have on both individual students and the broader school community.

Equipping advisors with actionable steps is a crucial component of the PD course, ensuring they possess the practical tools needed to implement restorative strategies effectively within the achievement academy. A specific focus is placed on teaching conflict resolution, recognizing it as an essential skill empowering students to navigate

challenges constructively, fostering a culture of open communication and resolution. The course also emphasizes the pivotal role relationships play in student success, offering strategies to strengthen connections between advisors and students, students and teachers, and students and students, creating a foundation for trust and collaboration.

Furthermore, the course highlights the alignment of restorative practices with the overarching goals of the school district. This understanding ensures advisors can seamlessly integrate these practices into the broader educational framework, fostering a consistent and supportive approach across the district.

Crucially, the PD experience goes beyond theoretical knowledge. Advisors have the opportunity to work hands-on with student contracts and other resources, enhancing their comfort with the format. Collaborative efforts involve the development of the Falcon leaders group presentation, and advisors actively participate in recruiting students to be part of the group. Mock meetings simulate real scenarios, allowing advisors to practice and refine their skills in meetings they will have with students, and addressing potential topics they may encounter.

In a culminating session, the PD course is devoted to the Falcon leaders groups. Students who have signed up to be part of the group are brought in and trained to be Falcon leaders. This practical approach ensures that advisors not only grasp the theoretical aspects of restorative practices but also gain practical experience and confidence in applying these principles within the dynamic context of the achievement academy.

The completion of this comprehensive restorative practices PD course is strongly recommended for all advisors within the achievement academy. By arming advisors with the knowledge and tools gained from this course, the achievement academy aims to create an environment where healthy relationships flourish, conflicts are resolved constructively, and students are empowered to succeed academically and personally.

This investment in PD underscores the commitment of the achievement academy to providing the highest level of support to every student in their academic journey.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

At the heart of the achievement academy's commitment to student success is a collaborative effort that taps into existing resources within the school day structure. Through partnerships with department directors, a comprehensive list of academic and behavioral supports has been identified and integrated into the fabric of the achievement academy. These resources are thoughtfully assigned to students through advisor meetings and contracts, ensuring a tailored approach to address the diverse needs of each individual.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- **Homework Club** – Students have access to an after-school homework club held in the library, providing a structured environment for completing assignments with additional support.
- **Subject-Specific Tutoring** – Specialized tutoring is available for various subjects in various languages, offering students targeted assistance to enhance their understanding and performance. Tutoring is offered through the National Honor Society and the World Language Honor Society.
- **Weekly Progress Reports** – Regular progress reports offer insights into students' academic journey, facilitating proactive intervention and support.
- **Math Center** – The math center provides students with an opportunity to receive extra help from district math teachers during all lunch periods.

BEHAVIORAL RESOURCES

- **Contracts** – Individualized behavioral contracts are crafted to guide students toward positive behavioral changes, fostering personal responsibility.

- **Peer Mediation** – A peer mediation program allows students to address conflicts constructively, empowering them to be active participants in conflict resolution.
- **Leadership Development through Falcon leaders** – Engaging students in leadership roles through the Falcon leaders program contributes to their personal growth and encourages positive behavioral choices.

ENL RESOURCES:

- **Contracts** – ENL students benefit from personalized contracts, addressing both academic and language-related challenges.
- **Teacher Extra Help** – Specialized extra help sessions are provided by teachers to support ENL students in their academic endeavors.

- **ENL-Specific Workshops** – Workshops tailored to the needs of ENL students offer additional resources and guidance.

Beyond academic and behavioral supports, the achievement academy recognizes the transformative power of community service as a restorative practice. By forging partnerships with clubs and community organizations, students are given the opportunity to engage in meaningful community service projects. This initiative not only supports personal growth and accountability but also fosters a sense of connection and belonging within the broader community. The collaborative approach to student success, incorporating both internal and external resources, ensures a well-rounded and holistic support system within the achievement academy.

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

To ensure the effective implementation of the achievement academy, advisors are guided by a series of practical steps aimed at providing comprehensive support to struggling students. First and foremost, regular advisor-student meetings are initiated, where academic and behavioral advisors schedule one-on-one sessions



with students, assess their unique needs, and collaboratively devise success plans tailored to individual circumstances.

Furthermore, the establishment of supportive student groups plays a pivotal role in fostering a restorative environment. The Falcon leaders group, consisting of student leaders and those with repeated disciplinary offenses, convenes monthly to engage in discussions and implement restorative practices. Similarly, the Falcon ENL leaders group holds monthly meetings for ENL student leaders and those facing academic challenges, creating a supportive and collaborative space for growth.

The practical implementation also includes the Restorative Learning Program (RLP), aligned with the Solutions Not Suspensions Act. This program supports students facing victimless offenses through after-school sessions from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., with certified teachers providing academic assistance. Weekly meetings with achievement academy advisors, counselors, and social workers further enhance the support structure for students enrolled in the RLP.

Moreover, the Unplugged Summer Program serves as an essential component, hosting a workshop during the summer to introduce students to the achievement academy. This program assists students in setting individual goals and creating plans for success, establishing a foundation for their academic journey.

To ensure the seamless execution of these initiatives, advisors follow a comprehensive checklist. This checklist includes scheduling initial one-on-one meetings, assessing student needs, creating personalized success plans, completing student contracts,

emailing contracts to supervising administrators, updating intervention spreadsheets, scheduling follow-up meetings, checking intervention sheets weekly, and contacting parents or guardians as needed. These practical steps collectively contribute to the achievement academy's overarching goal of providing targeted support and fostering success among all students.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating the achievement academy model into your school fosters a culture of support and empowerment, ensuring every student has the tools and resources needed to overcome challenges and succeed academically. By embracing restorative practices and providing targeted support, we can create an environment where all students can thrive and achieve their goal of graduation.

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