

Research shows that students learn better in a positive culture that connects them to learning. Having a safe and caring environment, supportive and personalized learning experiences, and personal relationships allow students to develop a connection to the school and optimize educational success. They can also reduce at-risk behavior and minimize discipline problems within the school environment. Adolescents in particular are dealing with many challenges physically, emotionally, and cognitively. An advisory program can provide the elements necessary to help students develop socially and to succeed academically.

The goal of the advisory program at the FIS is personalization. Through an ongoing mentor relationship with a teacher-advisor in a small group setting, students will develop important interpersonal skills that will help them cope with the increasing demands of schooling, as well as the more complex social demands of adolescence. Specifically, the purposes of the MS Advisory Program at The FIS are:

- To help students to identify and build on their strengths
- To provide developmental guidance, both formal and informal
- To explore the process of group development
- To foster communication between the home, school, and among members of the school community
- To encourage supportive peer relationships and practice conflict resolution
- To promote an awareness of diversity and tolerance
- To embrace service learning both within and outside the school
- To develop and nurture student leadership
- To foster a sense of community within the middle school

## How does it work?

Each student in the middle school is assigned to an advisory group with one teacher advisor and 10-12 other students from his/her class. For the 2013-2014 school year, there are four advisors assigned to each grade level, two to each class. Students will convene with the other advisory group from their class each morning for attendance and each afternoon at the lockers. For one lesson per week, students will meet with their advisor and advisory group. These lessons will incorporate the purposes of the program and involve activities that are designed to help students to more closely meet their potential. In addition, there will be middle school assemblies scheduled on a regular basis during this lesson time for whole community activities, performances, programs, etc.

The MS Advisory Program, along with teachers, staff and parents, will facilitate the learning of our students by fulfilling the FIS mission:

To foster international-mindedness through a challenging curriculum in a caring and cooperative environment, inspiring students to become well-rounded citizens committed to the service of humanity.