

# 5 Days of Responsive Advisory Meeting Plans

**Purpose: Build Student-to-Student Affiliation**

	<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>DAY 2</b>
<b>Arrival Welcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Greet each student by name as they enter.</li> <li>➤ Remind students to review message.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Greet each student by name as they enter.</li> </ul>
<b>Announcements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss or review message content and RAM topics.</li> <li>➤ Highlight relevant news and events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss or review message content and RAM topics.</li> <li>➤ Highlight relevant news and events.</li> </ul>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<p><b>One-Word Sharing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Remind students to quickly greet everyone in their group before they begin.</li> <li>➤ Students take turns using one word to tell their small group something they enjoy or something they're looking forward to.</li> </ul>	<p><b>One-Sentence Sharing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students take turns using one sentence to tell their small group about something they're proud of or something that makes them unique.</li> <li>➤ A volunteer from each small group shares the group's sentences with the whole group.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity</b>	<p><b>Just Like Me</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use information from acknowledgments to come up with "Just Like Me" prompts ("I like mystery novels," "I'm excited for the pep rally," etc.).</li> <li>➤ To reflect, ask: "What did you learn about our group just now?"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shared Truths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students share information to discover what they have in common.</li> <li>➤ To reflect, ask: "What is one new connection you've made?"</li> </ul>

DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Greet each student by name as they enter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Greet each student by name as they enter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Greet each student by name as they enter.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Love It or Leave It</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Group members take turns asking and answering “Love it or leave it” prompts about food, hobbies, movies, etc.</li> <li>➤ Students try to recall all foods, hobbies, movies, etc., discussed within their group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>What’s the News?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students take turns asking and responding to “What’s the news?” in their groups.</li> <li>➤ Volunteers report the news shared in their small group to the whole group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making a Claim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pose a scenario: “Someone you know wants to come to our school but is worried about making friends. What would you tell them? What evidence would support your claim?”</li> <li>➤ Students take turns sharing their pitch with their small group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Common Commonalities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Groups brainstorm things they have in common (favorite foods, sports, games, music, movies, books, etc.).</li> <li>➤ To reflect, ask: “What is one commonality that surprised you?”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Encore</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Groups brainstorm songs with a given word (<i>dream, hope, happy</i>).</li> <li>➤ To reflect, ask: “What ways did you support each other during this activity?”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Snowball</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students write a response to finish the sentence: “I know I belong in this school because . . .”</li> <li>➤ To reflect, ask: “What were some things you noticed about belonging at school?”</li> </ul>

# Purposes of Responsive Advisory Meetings

Responsive Advisory Meeting (RAM) is a strong, flexible structure. Based on your observation and relationships with students, you can design meetings to address a wide range of students' interests and needs, as you will see below.

## Build Student-to-Student Affiliation

Middle school students are in a period of significant developmental changes. As their need for autonomy increases, they learn to navigate new school experiences and seek new peer connections. Responsive Advisory Meetings with this purpose help students:

- Get to know one another on a deeper level
- Build stronger, more positive relationships

## Support Academic Readiness

Every middle school has a set of academic goals for its students. Responsive Advisory Meetings designed to help students achieve their academic goals do so through a “whole child” lens. While an important focus is helping students meet achievement standards, consideration is also given to helping them:

- Develop academic skills
- Develop social and emotional skills
- Learn to face challenges
- Learn help-seeking skills

## Strengthen Advisor-Advisee Relationships

For middle school students to be successful, it is critical that they have a positive relationship with at least one adult at school. To ensure that this happens, Responsive Advisory Meetings with this purpose can help students foster:

- A relationship with at least one adult at school who knows and cares about them
- A positive mentoring relationship with the Advisory teacher
- A trusting relationship with the Advisory teacher

## Develop Communication and Social Skills

Sometimes, there's an expectation that middle school students should already have well-developed communication and social skills. However, these skills must be

explicitly taught to all students. When the primary purpose of Responsive Advisory Meeting is communication and social skills development, the meeting focuses on helping students develop competencies such as:

- Listening attentively
- Speaking effectively
- Displaying cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control

### **Energize and Re-engage**

After sustained periods of academic focus, middle school students can benefit from Responsive Advisory Meetings involving movement or other activities that:

- Give them a brief mental break
- Help them recharge for the learning ahead

### **Reflect and Recalibrate**

Middle school is the students' community. There may be times when the primary purpose for Responsive Advisory Meeting is to take stock of events, circumstances, or conflicts in the school or greater community that have caused harm, or to address critical issues such as:

- Taking care of school property
- Preparing for high school
- Responding to bullying/cyberbullying

### **Extend Learning Through Themes**

During the middle school years, students hone their talents and often develop life-long hobbies, interests, and skills. Theme-based Responsive Advisory Meetings may cross grade levels and be organized into groups of students with similar interests. They often extend to:

- Service learning projects
- Partnerships with local businesses
- Partnerships with other organizations in the community or school
- Older students mentoring younger students

# Responsive Advisory Meeting 1-Day Planner

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Arrival Welcome</b></p> <p>How will you greet students as they arrive? Where will you stand? What will you say and do?</p>	
<p><b>Announcements</b></p> <p>What information do students need to know (school or team events, upcoming assignments, etc.)? How do you want students to interact with the message?</p>	
<p><b>Acknowledgments</b></p> <p>What topic (connected to the purpose/goals for this meeting) will students discuss in small groups or with a partner? What will be the format or structure for their discussions?</p>	
<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p>What whole-group activity will you use to connect to the purpose/goals for this meeting? What do students need to know to do this activity successfully?</p>	

# Acknowledgments

## *Essentials for Introducing Acknowledgments*

Keeping in mind the purpose you chose for the Responsive Advisory Meeting, how will you introduce the concept of acknowledgments to the class?

- What will you say?
- What skills and behaviors need to be taught, modeled, and reinforced?
- How will you do this?

## **Supporting Students' Speaking and Listening Skills**

Here are some ways to support students as they learn to share news and opinions.

- **Use sentence stems (or starters)**—Posting a sentence stem for students to complete will help them focus and also reinforce their use of complete sentences—especially useful with students who are learning English. For example:

For fifth graders, a sentence stem might be: “My favorite character in our book is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.”

For eighth graders, a sentence stem might be: “I want my self-portrait to convey these three key ideas about myself: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.”

- **Give clear directions**—Whether assigning a topic or a sentence stem to use, be specific. Setting clear parameters in your directions can help students stay on track. For example, instead of saying “Tell about your engineering project,” narrow the focus: “Tell one important aspect of your engineering project.”
- **Use think-alouds**—To model how to decide on one idea among many to talk about, you might do a “think-aloud” to narrate your thought process. If the topic is “Kinds of problems I like to solve,” your think-aloud could sound like this: “Hmm. I really like math, but math problems aren’t the only kind I like to solve. Trying to set up our own soccer game after school can cause problems, like how to choose teams and which team goes first. I like solving that kind of problem, too, so that’s what I’ll talk about.”

## Supporting Students in Responding to the Speaker

- **Brainstorm ideas**—When you first introduce acknowledgments, ask students to brainstorm possible ways to acknowledge and respond to the speaker. To give students some ideas to draw on, write their ideas on a chart before doing acknowledgments.
- **Teach and model making comments and asking questions**—Help students learn how to listen attentively and to acknowledge the speaker in positive ways, such as by making respectful comments that directly connect to what the speaker shared and asking friendly questions that express genuine interest in the speaker’s ideas and feelings.

## Key Acknowledgments Skills to Teach, Model, and Practice

The following chart summarizes skills that will help middle school students develop proficiency in graciously sharing news and opinions—and in giving acknowledgments to the speaker.

<b>Around-the-table conversations and acknowledgments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Speak in a clear voice</li><li>➤ State one main idea</li><li>➤ Listen quietly and respectfully while others are speaking</li><li>➤ Remember key details of what was shared</li></ul>
<b>Partner conversations and acknowledgments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ State one main idea with supporting details</li><li>➤ Ask friendly questions to elicit more information</li><li>➤ Make empathetic comments</li></ul>
<b>Public speaking practice and acknowledgments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Sign up to participate</li><li>➤ Choose school-appropriate topics to speak about</li><li>➤ Look at the audience when speaking</li><li>➤ Give full attention to the speaker</li></ul>

## *Activities*

### **Common Commonalities**

The goal is for students to discover as much as they can about what they all have in common. Name a topic or two to help students start their discussion (for example, how many siblings they have, local places they've visited, or what they like best about school). As students discuss the topics—and any other school-appropriate ones they wish—to find commonalities, they write down what they all have in common (for example, we all have a younger sister, we all moved here from another state). Challenge students to dig deeper beyond obvious commonalities such as color of hair and eyes.

### **Encore**

This activity calls for teamwork. Call out a word or topic (for example, winter, nature, or food) and set a time limit (five minutes or less). At their tables or desk clusters, students try to come up with as many songs that contain that word (or relate to that topic) as they can. To help students be successful, take a few minutes for everyone to quietly think about songs that contain the word or relate to the topic.

### **Shared Truths**

In this activity, students share information to discover what they have in common. Each student writes on a sheet of paper one thing they think applies to the whole group (We're 7th graders); one that might apply to some (We are on the basketball team); and one that applies to them (I want to make every foul shot this season). Collect the papers, choose one, and read the statements in order. Students stand if the first statement applies to them and stay standing until they hear a statement that doesn't apply.

### **Just Like Me**

Call out a favorite food. Students who also like that food stand up and say, "Just like me!" Repeat using other favorites (songs, movies, books, and so on).

### **Snowball**

Pose a question to the group, such as "What went well today?" "What was most challenging this week?" or "What was the most fun during this grading period?" Students write their answer to the question anonymously on a piece of paper. Then they crumple their paper into a "snowball" and toss it into the center of the room. Next, everyone collects a "snowball" and takes turns reading it aloud. Facilitate a whole-group discussion about the responses.



# Arrival Welcome

## Notes:

### *Sample Arrival Welcome Ideas*

#### **Variations for Handshakes and Waves**

You can add variety by replacing the standard handshake and wave with these variations:

- Micro-wave (wave a pinky)
- Double high five (use both hands)
- “ET” handshake (touch index fingers)
- Elbow rub
- Ankle shake
- High five
- Low five
- Fist bump
- Hip bump

#### **Greetings in Various Languages**

Saying “good morning,” “hello,” or a similar salutation in a language other than English enriches students’ learning. Search online or ask native speakers of the language for help with pronunciations and proper usage.

## **Announcements Responsibilities**

In implementing announcements messages and assessing students' skill in interacting with them, keep the following responsibilities in mind.

### **Teacher's Responsibilities**

- Prepare the message before students arrive.
- Model neat presentation and correct grammar and punctuation.
- Incorporate current Responsive Advisory Meeting topics into the message and any related interactive tasks.
- Vary the kinds of skills required in the related interactive tasks.
- Select an appropriate format for reading the message during the meeting and vary the format regularly.

### **Students' Responsibilities**

- Read the message upon entering the room.
- Follow any directions in the message.
- Read or follow along with the reading of the message (if read aloud).
- Participate in discussion or work based on the message.

# Announcements Message Setup

## *Elements of the Announcements Message*

### **Greeting**

A salutation or heading opens the announcements message. Many advisors use a letter salutation, such as “Dear Seventh Graders” or “Good Morning, Problem-Solvers!” No matter the choice of words, the greeting is friendly in tone and tells students “This message was written especially for you—come and read it!”

### **Date (optional)**

You may want to include the date in the upper right corner, as it would appear in a letter. Younger middle school students can benefit from seeing the date in a variety of formats: with and without abbreviations or in shorthand such as 3/30/20\_\_.

### **Body**

An announcements message generally consists of two or three brief statements about the day’s topic. An inspirational quote can be added for variety.

### **Related Interactive Tasks**

This prompt invites students to interact in some way with the message and is related to the purpose of the meeting. The prompt may include a question or statement to stimulate thinking or a simple activity for students to complete. See the sample announcements messages for examples.

### **Notes and Events**

The message concludes with a brief list of upcoming dates students need to be aware of, extracurricular activities, or required actions.

## *Working With the Announcements Message*

The announcements message gains its power from the advisor-student and student-student interactions it generates when students read the message (independently or as a group) and help each other complete any related tasks.

When to work with the announcements message is up to you. Depending on the purpose of the Responsive Advisory Meeting, the content of the message, and students’ needs on that particular day, you may decide to work with the message at the start of the meeting, during it, and/or as you wrap up your meeting.