

What is Advocacy??

In an effort to improve student/parent/ school community relationships and to provide a safety net for students Haskell Schools 2016-2017 bell schedule will be changing to accommodate Professional Learning Communities (PLC) day and advocacy at the middle/high school buildings. The late start day will move to Wednesday at both sites.

PLC 's are a designated set time for staff development. Staff development improves learning for all students. Professional Learning Communities organize adults (the school staff) into learning/teaching communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. The most powerful forms of staff development occur in ongoing teams that meet on a regular basis for the purposes of learning, joint lesson planning, and problem solving. These learning teams operate with a commitment to the norms of continuous improvement and engage their members in improving their daily work to advance the achievement of student learning. They take collective responsibility for the learning of all students.

The inclusion of an Advocacy system is also being put into place for the 2016-2017 school year at the middle school/high school level and will take place on Wednesdays. Many have asked what is student advocacy and how could this program benefit my student?

The Student Advocacy System bridges the gap between school and home. School staff members act as family advocates for a manageable number of students and their families. Student advocates do whatever needs doing to help the students in their advocate group succeed. Advocates work with these students to set goals for their character growth and educational/career endeavors. They contact families regularly and involve them in helping their children do well in school, and they team with their staff colleagues to help all students realize their goals.

Data on student behavior, attendance, and progress toward graduation and academic performance help staff identify what kind of support each student needs. In most middle and secondary schools, sheer numbers make it hard to form close relationships. With so many students across multiple classes, teachers' interactions with families tend to be geared toward rules and problems rather than constructive and positive teamwork in support of their child's education. Student advocates find that building a personal relationship with a small group of students and their families is highly rewarding, at the same time, they have assurance that all students will have someone who advocates for them and partners with the parents to do so.

Each teacher will be assigned 14-16 students who they will meet with once weekly. The students will stay with the same advocate and student group throughout middle school and will transfer to another advocate/group for high school. Middle school groups consist of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. High school groups will consist of 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students. Parents will be contacted by the advocate teacher monthly. Parents can also contact their student's advocate to express concerns and to check on their student.

We understand this is a change and we appreciate your partnering with us to promote the success of our students.

Thank you,

Advocacy Committee