

ADVISORS HELP YOU GET THERE:  
PERSONALIZED LEARNING PLANS IN THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

by  
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requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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## SUMMARY

The question I sought to answer in this project was, “How does an urban Indigenous alternative school create a system in which personalized learning plans and advisor relationships improve student outcomes?” The project that was created in response to this question is based on a model of advisories and culturally relevant pedagogy, as well as the infusion of culturally relevant teaching. The artifact that was created is a framework for a personalized learning plan (PLP) and advisory model (Appendix A). The framework is meant to do rebuild trust between a student and their family and the school system. It is also meant to better address student needs, personalize the learning experiences and pathways to align with student interests and goals, as well as help the student develop long term goals. The overall objectives of the project are the following:

- Improve relationships between students and advisors, faculty, and staff at the school
- Improve overall communication skills of students
- Increase student self-advocacy
- Reflect on needs, interests, and weaknesses that should be addressed within the school and beyond
- Improve goal setting and planning skills
- Increase understanding of graduation plan and post-secondary plans
- Decrease likelihood of dropping-out of school
- Increase communication between families, school, and students
- Measure success via educational data and personal reflection
- Increase student-centered decision making

- Determine what aspects of cultural identity and behavior should be validated, affirmed, built upon, and bridged

These goals emerge from several theorists (Barraza, Bartgis, & Fresno Native Youth Council, 2016; Fox, 2014; Gay, 2000; Hollie, 2017; and Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010). Wiggins and McTighe's (2001) theories around Understanding by Design and assessments were also used in the design of the project.

The project begins by assigning students to an advisor. This can be done in a small setting with just one or two teachers, or it can be done schoolwide. The advisor should be a teacher of the student. Then, the advisor is meant to meet both individually with the student as well as in a group with their advisees. These meetings should be occurring on a regular basis in order to build relationships and community. As the meetings occur, the PLP is updated with pertinent information. On the backend, the advisor is building a relationship with the family as well. Needs for support and resources are continuously evaluated. The advisor also disseminates pertinent information to various other stakeholders within the school including other staff and faculty members.

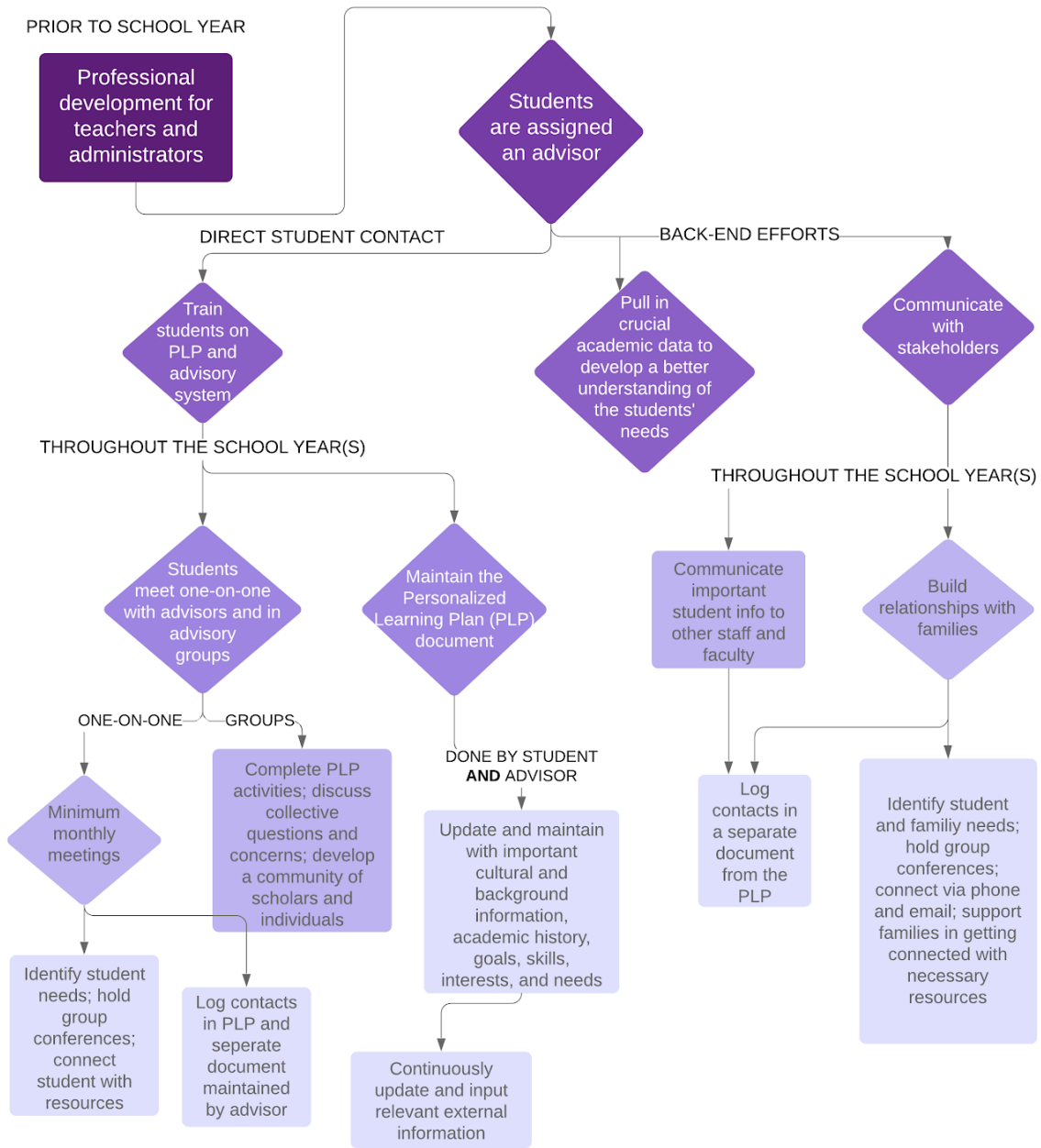
The main individuals at the focus of this project are the students and advisors at an Indigenous alternative program in a major metropolitan area (hereafter referred to as "the school"). The students are 14- to 20-years-old and range in grades nine through twelve. That being said, the majority of the students enter the school between ages 16-19 in grades 11 and 12. A number of the students are fifth- or sixth- year seniors. The students are a variety of genders, ethnicities or tribal affiliations, and sexual orientations. Most students at this alternative program primarily self-identify as Indigenous or identify as having multiple ethnicities. This project is tailored toward the population at the urban Indigenous alternative school, but it could also be

relevant to other alternative schools or possibly even some traditional school spaces. With the proper implementation, including staff investment and training, student resources, and administrative support, the personalized learning plan and advisory model could thrive.

## Appendix A

### Personalized Learning Plan and Advisory Framework

**Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) and Advisory Framework for Implementation**  
FIGURE 1



Appendix B  
Personalized Learning Plan Document

**Personalized Learning Plan**

**Only fill in colored boxes.**

Name:

School Year:

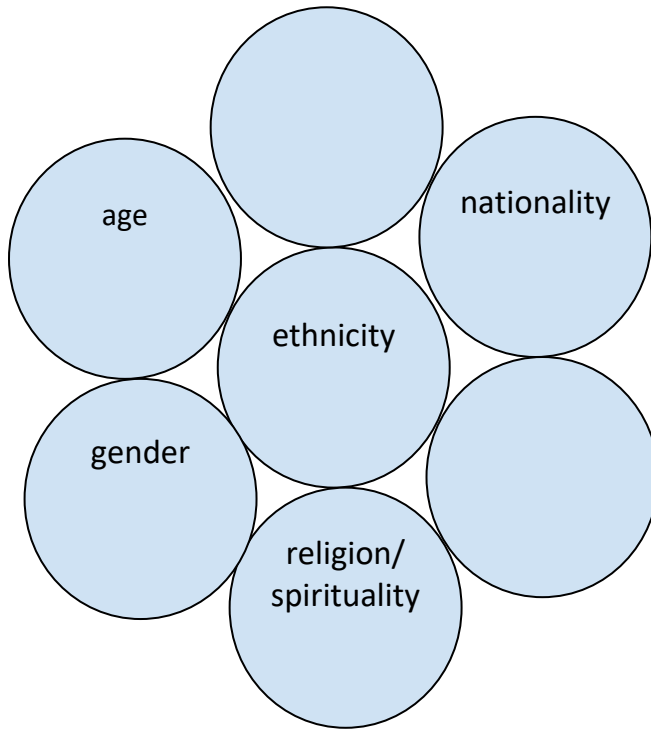
Advisor:

Parent/Guardian:

Phone number of parent/guardian:

## About Me

### *Cultural affiliations*



Your culture is a very important part of you. There are many different aspects of culture. Below you will see some aspects of culture. Some of the circles are blank because there may be aspects of culture that aren't represented in the other circles.

Please fill out as much of the table below as you want so your advisor can get to know you better. If you think of other cultural aspects that aren't represented in the circles above, please add them.

<b>Age</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
<b>Orientation</b>	
<b>Nationality</b>	
<b>Religion</b>	



Describe your culture in a few sentences including what you would like your advisor and the larger world to know. This could include strengths, facts, history, or anything you find relevant.

Describe the ways in which your culture should be represented at school. Please write one to five sentences (or more, if you wish).

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### ***Short Term Goal(s)***

***Date:***

In the next few months at school or personally, what do you want to accomplish?

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### ***Long Term Goal(s)***

***Date:***

In the next five+ years of your life, what do you want to accomplish?

### ***Current Credits***

Use your credit evaluation or transcript to fill in the boxes of where you are currently at on your credit journey.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Credit Requirement</b>	<b>Credits I Earned</b>	<b>Credits I Need</b>
<b>English 9</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>English 10</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>English 11</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>English 12</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Fitness for Life</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>Health Science</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>Fine Arts</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Geography</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>World History</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>US History</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>US Government</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>Economics</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>Intermed. Alg./Alg. 2</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Alg. 2/Pre-Calc.</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Geometry</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Biology</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Chemistry/Physics</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Physical Science</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Electives</b>	<b>6.0</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.5</b>		

## ***Personal Talents & Interest***

Use the Do What You Are instrument to learn more about yourself as a person.

Personality Type (four letters)

Strengths of that personality type

- 
- 
- 
- 
-

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## ***Interests***

There are two steps to exploring your interests. Please complete each of them. The second one will take you a bit longer.

[If I Ran the School](#)

[Interest-A-Lyzer](#)

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## ***Communication Style***

Next, you will complete the [communication style inventory](#).

What is your main method of communication?

Review the main characteristics of this style. Write down some characteristics you identify with below.

Do you agree that this is a good representation of our you communicate? Why or why not?

What is missing from this description?

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**Updated Credits - Halfway through the year**

Use your credit evaluation or transcript to fill in the boxes of where you are currently at on your credit journey.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Credit Requirement</b>	<b>Credits I Earned</b>	<b>Credits I Need</b>
<b>English 9</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>English 10</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>English 11</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>English 12</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Fitness for Life</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>Health Science</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>Fine Arts</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Geography</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>World History</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>US History</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>US Government</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>Economics</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
<b>Intermed. Alg./Alg. 2</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Alg. 2/Pre-Calc.</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Geometry</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Biology</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Chemistry/Physics</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Physical Science</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Electives</b>	<b>6.0</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.5</b>		

***Individual Conferences Record***

In this section, you and your advisor will record the details of the individual conferences you have. Record the date, time, and what was discussed.

Conference #1

Conference #2

Conference #3

Conference #4

Conference #5

Conference #6

Conference #7

Conference #8

Conference #9

Conference #10

Conference #11

Conference #12

Conference #13

Conference #14



Conference #15

Conference #16

Conference #17

Conference #18

Conference #19

Conference #20

## REFERENCES

- Barraza, R., & Bartgis, J. (2016). Indigenous youth-developed self-assessment: The personal balance tool. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research (Online)*, 23(3), 1-23. doi:10.5820/aian.2303.2016.1
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