

STUDENTS MENTORING STUDENTS

BEACH BALL QUESTION & ANSWER

1. If you were talking in your sleep, what would you say?
2. What is the first thing that you do when you get out of bed?
3. What is your favorite movie? What is your favorite movie line?
4. Approximately how many jokes do you know by heart? Tell us an appropriate one.
5. What do Martians do to have fun on Mars?
6. If you were to treat yourself to “the finer things in life”, what would they be?
7. If your life was being turned into a movie, who would play you and why?
8. Where is the worst place you have ever been stuck waiting?
9. What is your 15 minutes of fame?
10. If you were invisible, where would you go?
11. If you could invent a jelly belly flavor what would it be?
12. What is something you are embarrassed owning?
13. What is something you couldn't live without?
14. If you were on TV, and theme music played when you walked in, what song would play?
15. What was the last book you read for fun?
16. Fill in the blank: When I dance, I look like _____.
17. Who is one person you wish you could meet?
18. If you could be a famous actor/writer/athlete/musician/artist, who would you choose? Why?
19. What is the worst occupation in the world?
20. What two TV shows do you watch most frequently?
21. What is a phobia you possess?
22. If you were given a canvas and water paint, what would you paint?
23. What celebrity irritates you the most?
24. Other than the standard items, what interesting items do you keep in your wallet/purse?
25. If you owned an enormous yacht, what would you name it?
26. What is one lifelong dream you have?
27. If you could ask the President of the US one question, what would it be?
28. What have you tried in your life and simply were not good at?
29. What is the scariest movie you have ever seen?
30. On a scale of 1-10, how hip are you?
31. What is the biggest advantage of being tall? Short?
32. How many minutes does it take you to get ready this morning?
33. What hobby have you always wanted to pick up?
34. If you could be a member of a sitcom family, what one would it be?



35. What is it about you that people find irresistible?
36. If you were an animal, what would it be?
37. What store is most represented in your wardrobe?
38. What event or technological breakthrough do you think will revolutionize the future?
39. What do you need more of right now?
40. What is the most beautiful word you can think of?
41. What beverage do you find nauseating?
42. What three adjectives best describe you?
43. If you were on a desert island, what two books would you want with you?
44. What is the first thing you notice when you meet someone?
45. If you were running for mayor of Fort Collis, what would be your campaign slogan?
46. What was your favorite book growing up? If you don't have one, what about a movie?
47. What American city does not deserve a place on the map and why?
48. What is the most common compliment you receive?
49. What is the best purchase you have ever made?
50. If you could add a word to the dictionary, what would it be?
51. What commercial product would you refuse to endorse?
52. What is your favorite pet name?
53. What word describes your internet knowledge?
54. If you were flying in a plane that was about to crash, who would you want next to you?
55. What two American Presidents do you know the most about?
56. What is the longest period of time you have spent in a car?
57. What is the best costume you ever wore for Halloween?
58. If you were a teacher, what subject would you teach?
59. What is the latest trend that simply baffles you?
60. If you were an evil dictator, where would you rule?
61. What is the worst grade you have ever received, and what class was it for?
62. What would you like your nickname to be?
63. If you could bathe in a vat of any food or beverage, what would you choose?
64. What is the last song that was stuck in your head?
65. What are you most proud of?
66. What is the worst piece of clothing someone can wear?
67. How many keys do you have on your key ring?
68. What age were you when you had your most embarrassing hairstyle and what was it?
69. What is the best advice you ever received?



70. What is the grossest thing you have ever done in public?
71. What song reminds you most of the 90's?
72. What do you regard as the most repulsive form of music?

FRESHMAN TRANSITION PROGRAM

STUDENTS
MENTORING
STUDENTS

We are more than role models, peer educators, mentors, friends, and passionate students...

We LEAD by example and follow through INSPIRATION.

As Ambassadors, we strive to do more than just listen, we HEAR.

We are the Poudre High School Ambassadors.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WHAT IS POUDBRE'S NEW FRESHMAN TRANSITION PROGRAM?

The Students Mentoring Students – Freshman Transition Program (**SMS**) is a yearlong peer-facilitated program that strives to introduce incoming freshman to Poudre High School. This orientation will help freshmen learn about their new school, develop friendships with students in their own grade as well as with their upper class peer mentors. Through intentional efforts and well-rehearsed facilitation, peer mentors will help freshmen feel comfortable being themselves thereby reducing the likelihood of inappropriate behavior in the name of “fitting in”. SMS is intended to reach beyond the freshmen class by building cultural competencies and a solid sense of community necessary for ensuring a safe and productive school environment. Through participation in the SMS program, freshmen will be more likely to work productively in groups, there will be increased tolerance and acceptance of diversity, and there will be a stronger sense community, thus an increase in Impala Pride. Freshmen will be exposed to positive upper class role models and given an opportunity to develop their own leadership skills.

The SMS program will be implemented by The Poudre High School Ambassadors, made up of juniors and seniors, who will facilitate bi-monthly meetings during Freshman Seminar classes. The student-facilitators will show up to each class prepared to lead an activity/discussion/assignment etc. which will have been practiced prior to their arrival. The ratio of peer-facilitator to student will vary class to class but averaging approximately 6:1. Each Ambassador will meet with the same freshmen every time as to encourage good rapport and relationship building.

WHY USE PEER LEADERS?

There is an enormous amount of research in education that explains the benefits of peer facilitation in the school setting. It is widely accepted that peer leaders in the upper grades develop leadership skills and find new ways to be productive at school. Younger students become connected to the school in meaningful ways and build relationships that are based on trust and communication with students they may otherwise not have the opportunity to get to know. The importance of freshmen to establish a meaningful personal connection with a peer mentor and its relationship to improved attendance and performance in high school has been documented by Dori Marshall, (“Making Smooth Move to High School,” Middle School Journal, pp. 26-29, November, 1992).

WHAT DO WE NEED?

The SMS program seeks classroom teachers who value the importance of establishing cooperation, tolerance, and respect in their classrooms. Teachers will have to be willing to offer class time (approximately 80 minutes per session) to the program. Teachers will be given advanced copies of the curriculum and asked to understand each session's activities. Participating teachers will break their classes up into small groups depending on the ratio of Ambassadors to students in each specific classroom, keeping in mind that each group should be balanced with regard to gender, ethnicity, and behavioral characteristics.

Teachers will be asked to grade students on participation, and to grade Ambassadors on their performance. Occasionally teachers may be asked to assign homework associated with a particular lesson or read a text out loud during class. Should that happen, reminder notices would be sent in advance via email. Additionally, the teacher must be present, not only physically, but educationally as well, while the groups meet, to assist with behavior management, and provide depth to the discussion in their classroom.

As each group progresses, classroom teachers are encouraged to meet with peer leaders, either individually or as a group, to offer essential feedback of their performance, whether they are struggling or excelling with their growth as a facilitator. Ideally teachers will be available for advice and support as the need arises.



THEME OF THE WEEK: Beginning to build a sense of community. Students and their peer leaders will complete activities that allow them to get to know each other. Students will also begin to get familiar with school clubs, student groups, and extra-curricular opportunities.

TIME: 75 minutes

CLASSROOM TEACHER/STUDENT PREPARATION: Each teacher will divide students into their pre-determined groups of six to seven students, already having taken into account gender, ethnicity, socialization skills, and behavioral tendencies. These groups should be labeled as seen fit, either numerically, (1, 2, 3) or with a unique name, for ease of identification. Ambassadors may wish to name their individual group!

ACTIVITIES:

Large group..... Introduction to the program (10 minutes)

Small group..... Review Names

Ground Rules

Check In/How Was Your Week?

Mystery Maze Walk (30 minutes)

Upcoming Events (5 minutes)

Beach Ball Question Game (15 minutes)

Wrap-up & Evaluation (5 minutes)

} (10 minutes)

SUPPLIES:

ALWAYS BRING YOUR BINDER!!!! YOU WILL BE DOCKED POINTS IF YOU FORGET TO BRING YOUR OWN BINDER!

Beach ball with numbers and corresponding questions

Blindfolds for Help Maze

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM (10 MINUTES)

You (the student-facilitator) will meet with the SMS Coordinator (Mr. Searle) in his office (#112A), just prior to the beginning of the period; he will have all of your necessary supplies. If he is not available, supplies will be left for you. You will have **already practiced** the lesson you are about to facilitate with your individual groups. Enter the classroom together and wait for the teacher to hand the class over to you. While standing in front of the classroom you will introduce yourselves; then one of you, (**previously decided**), will give a short overview of the program.

Say **in your own words**, *“We are here to welcome you and help you get to know your new high school. From this point forward you are more than just students at Poudre, you are all now Impalas, and that means something. During the course of this semester you will be working with us every other week. One of the biggest challenges freshmen have faced since being moved to high school is keeping up with the demands of a much faster paced learning environment. We are all really excited to be able to help transition you into high school and hope that you enjoy this time with us while learning important things about high school at the same time. So let’s go ahead and break into the small groups that Mr. or Ms. ____ (use the teachers name) has assigned.”*

Teachers will have divided the students into groups depending on the number of students/Ambassadors in the class. Split yourselves up, one student-facilitator per group. At this point, have students **quickly** arrange their desks into circles in separate parts of the room. Be sure that every student has, and is seated in a desk, don’t let kids sit on desks, tables, the floor, etc., unless everyone is on the same level, i.e. everyone on the floor. Also make sure that everyone is included in the circle, even if they are resistant! This is IMPORTANT!

Introduce yourself to the group and explain that you will be their peer mentor each time the group meets. Let them know that they may do activities as a whole class but that this is their SMS group. Allow your personality to come out here! Remember that your students are WAY more nervous than you are, and they will be taking cues from you, both verbal and non-verbal, as to how comfortable they should be.

REVIEW NAMES

Now it’s time to get to know the students!!! Can anyone say cheesy? Name games are corny but effective. Decide which name game you will play and **sell it!** As with all activities, your students will enjoy the game only as much as you do! Remember to always be a cheerleader (the more genuine the more effective).

Animal Name Game = Derrick/Donkey

Action/Adjective Name Game = Dashing Derrick or Dapper Derrick

Food Name Game = Donut Derrick

GROUND RULES

In order for the students to feel secure in the group, they need to agree on certain “*Ground Rules*”. Have your group discuss the group rules their teacher has already established in the classroom. Ask them which rules are important for this group. The rules should include:

1. **Confidentiality:** Rumor control vs. confidentiality. What happens in Vegas never stays in Vegas. Good judgment always reigns supreme.
2. **Respect for other’s opinions:** There are no right or wrong answers in this group. Everyone has a right to his or her opinion. Respect also means avoiding disrespectful language, i.e. “gay”, “retarded”, etc.
3. **Listen to what is being said:** Only one person talks at a time. Everyone is expected to contribute.
4. **Everyone MUST participate:** Explain that his or her level of participation will affect his or her seminar grade. Set the expectation early so that freshmen know they have to participate.

CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

A "Check-In" of some form will be used throughout the semester and, if administered correctly, will help to foster an open and honest dialogue within the group. This exercise can be about personal issues, academic issues, or just plain silly. Typically check-ins will begin surface and impersonal and progressively become deeper and deeper as the year goes on. Check-in questions should be pre-thought out and changed up to prevent students from getting bored, or from simply going through the motions. Questions that are too open ended may get in the way of what you are actually after. Be sure to ask for what you want. Ex: "How were your two weeks since we last met?" doesn't really ask anything and probably won't produce responses of much substance. You always want to ask a question in the positive with opportunity for a little self-disclosure.

Possible check-in questions include:

- ① Highs/lows of the week. This gives you an opportunity as the mentor for follow up questions.
- ① Tell me your happy and your crappy. *Be sure to be prepared for goofy behavior with this one.*
- ① Weather recap of the previous weeks and forecast of the week to come. "Last two weeks have been fairly cloudy with a lot of rain, but next week will be sunny."
- ① Number 1-10, 1-100, etc. "What made you a 88? What would it take to get you to a 90?"
- ① Assign your week a percentage grade, "My week was a 79%", Don't forget the WHY?!
- ① What is one interest of yours that others in this group may not know about?
- ① What is occupying the majority of your thoughts at this very moment?
- ① What's one thing that brings you energy and joy? *Be prepared to keep it appropriate!*
- ① What do you like best about _____ (school, weekends, vacation, the current season, etc.).
- ① What would be your rapper name?

Caution: Watch your time carefully. If check-ins go on too long they will take valuable time away from important agenda items and can seem too "touchy-feely."

MYSTERY MAZE WALK (30 MINUTES)

Explain to the students that they will be doing a fun activity that requires a bit of maturity. Successful facilitation of this team builder will set the stage for future activities. It is therefore important to establish your authority as the group leader. Now is time for you to become comfortable being "in charge". Don't forget your training on ways to be a successful facilitator. Tell students that they will be completing an obstacle course that you have previously set up for them, *pause for dramatic effect*, and then tell them they will be blindfolded. Allow time for the groans and moans☺. There are four rules in this game and they need to be made very clear.

1. "This is a silent game so we will be completing the entire activity in silence. Once you complete the maze you will be asked to stay quiet until everyone is done."
2. "Removing your blindfold, or cheating in anyway will result in disqualification."
3. "Once you make contact with the rope you must remain in contact with it the entire time. You may switch hands but one hand must be holding it at all times."
4. "If at any time you need help, just raise your hand and wait silently."

Get a verbal buy in from every student asking, "Is everyone capable of following these four rules?" Explain to students that failure to abide by one or any combination of the above will result in being removed from the game. The students will walk toward the obstacle course but stop short, prior to seeing it, in order to put on blindfolds. Once everyone is blindfolded, have students stand in a single file line with their right hand on the right shoulder of the person in front of them. The facilitator will slowly lead the first person to the course. One at a time the students will be entered into the course by taking their hand and putting it on the rope. Once everyone is "on the rope" restate the four rules then say, "Go". Remember that you are watching for students to raise their hand; removing their blindfold and putting your finger over your lips as you do it as if to say, "SHHHH". Without their blindfold the student is now free to leave the maze and watch as his or her peers struggle to complete the task. Remember that it is extremely important to remain quiet, even after finishing. Once everyone is finished, walk students back to their classroom to debrief the activity, or weather permitting, debrief outside. The processing afterward is where the activity becomes more than just a game. **Remember** the ground rules you previously established stating that one person talks at a time. Ask students why we played that activity. Ask how this activity can relate to their new high school experience. The ultimate metaphor in this game is that students need to feel comfortable asking for help. Now that they are in high school it is important for them to recognize their needs and to be pro-active before it is too late. Explain that one of the biggest problems freshmen experience at Poudre is falling behind because the workload is so much greater than they are used to. It is okay to ask for help from ones teacher!

POSSIBLE PROCESS QUESTIONS:

- ❶ *Why did we do this activity?*
- ❷ *Why is it important to ask for help?*
- ❸ *What did it feel like when you learned that others had completed the maze and you were still stuck?*
- ❹ *How does the previous question relate to life?*
- ❺ *When have you asked for help in your life? What was the outcome?*
- ❻ *Think of a time you wish you would or could have asked for help. How would that have changed things?*
- ❼ *How have you asked for help in school before? How could you ask for help at Poudre?*

UPCOMING EVENTS (5 MINUTES)

Go over upcoming school events for the next two weeks, using the upcoming events highlights sheet. This will clearly take some homework on your part. One student will be responsible for being all knowing regarding upcoming events and will give updates during Ambassador time. Don't allow yourself to lose credibility by showing up unprepared!

BEACH BALL QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME (15 MINUTES)

Show the students the beach ball and explain that they will be playing a question and answer game. It is important to first establish a few ground rules. This is not a Lady Gaga concert and therefore the beach ball should not be batted around the classroom. The ball should be lightly tapped toward someone in the circle, who must catch the ball, (not tap it toward someone else). Without moving their hands the person who catches the ball should look at what number lies beneath, (**or closest to**) their right thumb. You, as the facilitator, will read the question that corresponds to that number. Once the question is answered that student then taps the ball toward someone who hasn't answered a question. Continue this way until all group members have answered a question. 15 minutes is a long time if each person is giving a 5 second answer so.... **Remember**, the students will take this activity as serious as you do and will therefore put as much thought into their answer as you require. If one question in particular is read, and it seems to be getting an emotional response from the group, STOP and have everyone in the group answer the question. YOU ARE THE FACILITATOR... SO... FACILITATE!

WRAP-UP & EVALUATION (5 MINUTES)

It is always very important to wrap up the session. Briefly summarize how you felt about the session. Try to be honest but constructive and from a positive place. Be sure to tell students how good it was to meet them and express your excitement for your next session. Remind your students that they all have at least one upper class friend and encourage them to say "Hi" should they see you in the hall. Say goodbye and tell them you will see them in a couple of weeks.

You have just completed your first week of facilitation! **Great job!** Reflect honestly on the job you did. What did you do well? What do you need to work on?

