
PROPOSAL

Date: 8/3/2026

Revised

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USA

Client: New Hope School District

Program: The following set of activities are intended to develop the skills for excellent advisory programming at the middle school level. All events and work will be delivered by Chris Balme, drawing on his experience and research, his book *Finding the Magic in Middle School*, and his Argonaut trainings supporting advisory practices at schools around the country.

Why Advisory: High-quality middle school advisory programs have been documented to increase student belonging and connectedness to school, lower rates of disciplinary issues and emotional distress, develop social and emotional skills, increase student engagement with school and prosocial behavior in school, and improve academic progress. For specific research references, see [Argonaut Advisory Training Manual](#), page 5.

Events include:

- **Full Day on November 3rd, 2026 including parent event.** This day has three main components, intended to help faculty hone the skills of excellent advisory facilitation, develop a solid foundation of adolescent developmental knowledge, and also engage parents with similar knowledge around how middle school brains work. The day includes 4 hours of faculty training, plus consultation meetings with key faculty and staff around advisory implementation, and finally an evening speaking for parents, titled *Finding the Magic in Middle School*. Focal points for the faculty training include 5 Facilitation Principles, tools to create safe spaces and manage sensitive conversations, and exploration of advisory curricula and conversation topics.
- **Full Day on February 12, 2027.** In this second in-person workshop, faculty will deepen their advisory facilitation skills through (1) further grounding in adolescent developmental science, equipping faculty with the skills to understand students' developmental needs in their advisories and set appropriate conditions; (2) tools to respond to challenges and peer conflicts in and through advisory, ensuring that conflicts aren't left to fester and can instead be learned from; and (3) skills to improve student connectedness to peers and schools through advisory. These skills are applicable in classroom spaces as well. In addition to a 4-hour faculty training, the day includes consultation time with faculty and key staff to discuss

emerging needs and opportunities with advisory, tuning the program two months after the original training to ensure a successful implementation.

- **Virtual Introductory Session.** Balme will deliver an online introduction to these topics, based on the research and methods in his book *Finding the Magic in Middle School*, for faculty and staff. This talk will provide a baseline of adolescent developmental science knowledge, focusing on how puberty causes neurological changes, which cause adolescents to prioritize certain experiences and mindsets above others. The talk focuses on three core drives that emerge from these brain changes, with specific application for how that guides us to understand, teach and facilitate middle schoolers.

In addition to the events above, this contract includes up to 3 hours of meetings with Chris Balme, before and/or after the talks, to tailor them to the community's needs and support follow-up.

Fee:

- \$15,000 workshop fees (covering all activities above)
- \$2,000 in travel costs, covering all costs including flights, hotel, incidental expenses, etc.

Payment Terms:

- Half of the above fees (\$8,500) are due within 30 days of contract signing. The remaining half (\$8,500) will be billed in January 2027, payable within 30 days. Payment can be accepted by check, credit card or bank transfer.

Materials Provided

- Chris Balme bio and headshot for PR purposes, and blurbs for the talks and workshops are available to be shared. W-9 for Zero Circle Labs is also available.
- Electronic copies of the *Argonaut Advisory Manual*, a 110-page guide to excellent advisory practices, will be shared for general use, as well as digital copies of all training presentations and materials.

Limitation of Liability

Each party's total and cumulative liability for direct damages arising out of or in connection with this agreement shall in no event exceed the fees payable by Client to Zero Circle Labs under the applicable contract that gave rise to such claim. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this agreement, in no event will Client or Zero Circle Labs be liable for any indirect, incidental, consequential, special or punitive damages (including without limitation lost profits) even if it has been advised of the possibility of such damages.

Force Majeure

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, neither party is liable for any failure to perform, or delay in performing, any particular obligations under this Agreement where the failure or delay arises from any cause or causes beyond its reasonable control, including without limitation fire, flood, earthquake, elements of nature, acts of God, acts of war, terrorism, riots, strikes, serious labor disputes, civil disorders or rebellions ("Force Majeure Event"). In the event of a Force Majeure Event, the both parties agree in good faith to reschedule within two months (as soon as possible). Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving the other party written notice if the other party fails to perform those obligations for thirty (30) days due to such Force Majeure Event.

Photography, Video & Audio Recording

If the Client wishes to make an audio or video recording of this event, it may be used within the school or parent communities involved in the event, but may not be posted in any online location which can be accessed publicly without password. Client may take photographs of the event to be used for their purposes such as a website, client-managed social media accounts, or other client-created materials.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized representatives.

THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS AGREED TO AND ACCEPTED BY:

Zero Circle Labs:

Chris Balme

Date

Client: New Hope School District

Authorized Signer

Date

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Signer