



WE ARE FARIBAULT



Faribault High School YPAR

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What is YPAR?

YPAR stands for Youth Participatory Action Research, short for Par.

YPAR is an innovative approach to positive youth and community development in which young people are trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them.



The Importance of Peer Mentorship in Schools

We chose the topic of peer mentorship because as a student body we have realized that we struggle with the connections between our 9th graders and upperclassmen. The class Peer Group Connection (PGC) has proven to be a core class in our school to help make those connections between our 9th graders and upperclassmen. PGC allows our 9th graders to feel like they can rely and count on someone.

Importance of School Mentorship Continued

Research from Harvard University (Center for Education Policy Research) shows that school mentorship improves academic outcomes, such as grades and attendance. It also helps to improve social and emotional skills like communication and high stress feelings.

School mentorship provides guidance for college and the future.

Current Student-Led Mentorship Environment at FHS

- Peer Group Connection (PGC)- A class/program where PGC Leaders (upperclassmen) guide 9th graders in their transition into high school
- Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)- Matching a high school student with an elementary school student to create an interactive bond filled with positivity

Our current student-led mentorship environment has improved throughout these past two years. With the addition of PGC our student leaders have had the opportunity to create a welcoming environment for our 9th grade students. PGC has created strong relationships between our students better than ever before.

Peer Group Connection

Peer Group Connection (PGC) is developed by Center For Supportive Schools. PGC is a evidence-based school-based program that trains older students to mentor younger students, primarily focusing on facilitating the transition to high school for 9th graders. The program uses a cross-age, peer-to-peer model where trained upperclassmen lead weekly outreach sessions with small groups of freshmen, helping them develop social and emotional learning (SEL) skills, improve their engagement, and foster a more welcoming and supportive school environment.

PGC started last year at the high school and is supported through a two year grant from Center For Supportive Schools. PGC is led by Ms. Knudson and Mrs. Zurbriggen along with support from Mrs. Borka and our admin team.

Surveys + Focus Group Findings from PGC

Our PGC Leaders conducted a survey this past spring as part of their grade. The results are below:

- 71.4% of 9th grade students learned from outreaches
- 71.4% of 9th grade students successfully connected with their peers at outreaches
- 85.7% of 9th grade students learned lessons related to high school and applied it to their personal life
- 82.1% of 9th grade students expressed their thoughts and feelings to their peer group
- 80.5% of 9th grade students have grown more comfortable in their peer group since the beginning of the year

Testimonies from 9th Grade Students

How has the PGC program helped make your transition into the high school smoother, more positive? “It’s helped me reach outside of my comfort level. I’m more social, I’m able to interact with more people instead of sticking in my own bubble.”

What are some other ways it has helped in your 9th grade year?

“It’s helped me advocate for myself more with my classes. If I don’t understand something I don’t let it slip, I ask the teacher. Priorities. Like realize what I can do to have a better relationship with everybody in my life.”

What do you enjoy most about participating in PGC? “Talking and understanding other people in the group. I’m learning more about my peers, what they’ve done and been through. Being able to connect with other people I wouldn’t normally talk to. I feel more comfortable with people that don’t look like me or live my same life.”

Outreach Photos



Outreach Photos



Call to Action

We want to leave you with the question- Who was a mentor in your life during your high school years that left a lasting impact? If you can't think of anyone, do you believe that peer mentorship is valuable?

Whether it is someone who helped you in your past or currently right now, mentors encourage you to become a better version of yourself.

We believe that PGC is crucial at FHS. We would love your support for peer mentorship to continue so we can build positive relationships.

Thank you for your time!

We would love to answer
any questions!