



# ‘CONVERSATIONS TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE’: Triad High School’s ‘Pause’ project

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*The articles are prepared by the participants of the discussion in their own words.*

The Triad High School “Pause” project, in its second year, is off to an outstanding start with 50 students, faculty, and parents involved. The goal of the Triad High School Pause project is to improve **“Acceptance”** among students of various grade levels, socio-economic groups, clubs, and athletic organizations. Students noted that more must be done to increase both tolerance and acceptance among the staff and student body. We want all students and faculty to feel as though they are an essential part of the Triad community.

Pause activities are geared toward both staff and students. Some activities will be extensive, while others will be more sporadic, as to keep students guessing about what activities the group will plan next. Students and staff members have so little “free time”

in the day to stop and reflect and reset their attitudes and behaviors, so we want to designate time for staff and students to do this and also reward those who are already doing so. If students feel less stressed, they will be happier and form more meaningful relationships. Likewise, teachers will benefit from a break in their day and time to spend outside of the classroom with students. The hope is that any camaraderie forged between teachers and students will spill over into the classroom.



Pause activities will include the following:

- Creation of a space, not a classroom or in the cafeteria, where students can meet in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere- they can pause and reset and a designated space
- Designing of a recognition wall to spotlight staff and student achievements- pausing to highlight positivity in the building
- Daily distribution of “Pause Cards” to recognize students making positive choices, like respecting and forgiving their fellow students, to be given out by the Brighter Futures team; these cards can be redeemed for rewards- celebrating students who “pause” and make a difference
- Friday Pause: “Recess” time during lunch and homeroom periods and/or activity time and “pauses” throughout the day over the intercom (includes playing music, student recognition, uplifting quotes, etc.)- sustained pauses to relieve stress and connect with peers and staff members.

The program will be evaluated and its success measured by:

1. Student survey regarding respect in our school. The survey will be conducted at the beginning of the year, before winter break and at the end of the year.
2. (Considering) Tracking office referrals throughout the year, believing that as TMS students’ self-respect grows, the number of office referrals will decrease.
3. The survey results and office referral numbers will be monitored for improvement and the program will be adjusted accordingly.



The impact of this initiative will be evaluated through data collected via the Illinois Youth Survey and a secondary survey which was administered to students and staff in the building. Additionally, we will monitor feedback from the school and local community using social media. Finally, observational data will be collected with the amount of positive feedback given within the building using our pillars.

The program focuses on improving school climate by creating opportunities for students and staff to make connections, build relationships, and increase acceptance. Staff and students are encouraged to “PAUSE” throughout the day and reflect on how they treat one another and themselves.

### **Student Appreciation Days**

Students receive a school-wide treat (Cotton candy, popcorn) and an opportunity to eat lunch outside, spend time in the spirit garden, play games, and listen to music. Different clubs provide the music playlist on a rotating basis.

### **Principal Appreciation Month**

Students signed thank you posters, hung them on the walls, and catered a pizza/salad lunch for the principals with a note, “You are an important pizza our school.”

### **Custodial Appreciation Day**

Students recognized Custodians with a thank you note, “We’d be a mess without you” and cookies shaped like brooms and buckets.

