

To view this email as a web page, go [here](#).

Update
April 2010

the brookline high school 21st century fund

local solutions for national challenges in education

The Ambitious Ithaka Advisory Program: Year Two

By Gaelen Harrington, BHS English Teacher & 21st Century Fund Program Liaison

"It's been quite a journey so far!" quip Jen Martin and Keira Flynn-Carson.

What are these two program leaders talking about? They're talking about Brookline High's Ithaka Advisory Program-- to date, the most ambitious of programs sponsored by the 21st Century Fund in the eleven years since the Fund was established. Why the name "Ithaka"? Well, the name carries rich connotations, which reflect the program's ambitious intentions. Reaching Ithaka is the goal Odysseus' journey in Homer's epic tale, *The Odyssey*. During his journey to Ithaka, Odysseus faces many challenges, but he also meets people along the way who help him to face those challenges.

High school is much the same way. The Ithaka Advisory Program's mission is to provide BHS students with a roadmap that will help them navigate Brookline High in order to get where they want to go next and gain a deeper understanding of themselves. Integral to that mission is the fostering of relationships among diverse groups of students as well as between students and BHS staff, for these relationships make every person's individual journey easier and more enlightening.

The Ithaka Advisory Program itself is in the midst of an arduous and enlightening voyage as it rolls out its four-year curriculum under the aegis the 21st Century Fund. Last year, the first leg of its four-year journey, was a particularly challenging one. Not surprising! A long-evolving program vision met the realities of implementation in the shifting seas of daily life at BHS. But Ithaka's program leaders, Jen and Keira, stayed focused and listened intently to the feedback they collected from students, teachers, and administrators involved. Applying their epic genius and heroic energy, they fine-tuned the freshman curriculum while devising a focused and vigorous framework for Advisory's roll out to sophomore year.

Now in the second year of its voyage, Ithaka Advisory is sailing on smooth seas! Recent responses to a mid-year evaluation were overwhelmingly positive. According to the faculty, the new tournament component in Advisory promotes "team building and camaraderie"; the community service emphasis--the holiday drive, in particular-- drew a "more prolific response" than anyone can recall. Most importantly, teachers feel much more connected to their Advisory students than they did to their traditional homeroom classes. The one-on-one conferences at report-card time "make a big difference," wrote one teacher. Several teachers claimed that they get to know students much better in Advisory than in the traditional homeroom format: "The experience is more personal"; "I feel more involved and connected to the students in Advisory." And what can be more heartening than to hear, "I love my Advisory students!"

[Learn more about the Ithaka Advisory Program here.](#)

About the 21st Century Fund

The Brookline High School 21st Century Fund innovates effective local



solutions to national challenges facing public high schools. [Visit the 21st Century Fund website](#) for more information or click the Donate Now button to make a contribution.

Forward this issue to a friend by clicking the icon below.



About This Newsletter

The *21st Century Fund Program Update* is produced by the Brookline High School 21st Century Fund office. For comments or questions, please contact Beth Henderson at beth_henderson@brookline.k12.ma.us or 617-713-5211.

If you do not wish to receive further issues, please unsubscribe at the bottom of this email.

This email was sent to: beth_henderson@brookline.k12.ma.us

This email was sent by: BHS 21st Century Fund
115 Greenough Street Brookline, MA 02445 USA



We respect your right to privacy - [view our policy](#)

[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [One-Click Unsubscribe](#)