

# RIVERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

## EMPOWERING STUDENT LEADERS TO BUILD A MINDSET-BASED CULTURE



Riverview High School's leadership team set out to elevate student voice, not as a one-time initiative, but as a culture shift powered by mindset-based learning. The school, located in Hillsborough County, Florida, implemented the 7 Mindsets program in 2022, as part of a district implementation focused on improving school climate and culture.

### Challenges

Principal Brian Spiro had a clear north star: "I'm trying to promote student leadership and student voice," and he saw 7 Mindsets as "a vehicle for that." Instead of starting with students, Riverview took an adults-first approach, giving staff time to build understanding and consistency before rolling out the work schoolwide. The team created a shared home base for resources, aligned a yearlong calendar to a "mindset of the month" and made it easy for teachers to access activities, conversation starters, and ready-to-use supports.

But Riverview's biggest breakthrough came from listening closely to what was already working. As implementation progressed, the team noticed something powerful: the most meaningful conversations happened when students led them. That insight sparked the creation of 7 Mindsets Student Ambassadors, a group that is intentionally built to reflect the full student body, including "silent leaders" who might not hold traditional leadership titles. The launch was invitational, not exclusive. Staff helped identify potential ambassadors, students came together to understand the "why," and participation was offered as an opportunity to grow, not a role to perform.

From there, the model became train-the-trainer. Each month, ambassadors meet ahead of the next mindset focus, preview lesson materials, and shape how the message will land with peers. They ask, "What questions do you think would land with your peers?" and design engagement strategies that feel authentic in a student-to-student setting. Ambassadors also made the work visible, creating posters and reinforcing a common language throughout the campus.

### School Snapshot

- 2,496 students in grades 9-12
- 27% Economically Disadvantaged
- 95% Graduation Rate





The real proof, though, comes through the voices of the Student Ambassadors themselves.

### Building a Connected Community

Celianys, a twelfth grader, described the program as a stabilizing force in a complicated world: she was “so grateful” the school created “a safe space,” and she loved that ambassadors are “everyone included,” not “a specific group.” Leading lessons helped students build community while learning they are “truly connected,” and teaching peers brought the mindsets to life because it’s “more understandable ... because you are going through this at the same time.”

### Building Confidence & Leadership Skills

Derek, a ninth grader, shared how the experience built his confidence and leadership skills. He said he started out “a little bit less talkative,” but the ambassador role helped him grow public speaking and draw others in, especially students who were hesitant at first. Over time, he watched classmates “start opening up.” His favorite mindset, The Time is Now, became personal: “There’s never a perfect time ... you’re going to make the time perfect by actually starting.”



### Building a Bridge to Belonging

Grace, an eleventh grader who is new to Florida and new to the school, described the ambassador’s experience as a bridge to belonging. She said leadership-based work helped her build connections when friend groups already felt established. She also highlighted Live to Give as the mindset that shaped her actions, motivating her to volunteer more, show up more fully, and serve the community. That mindset showed up in real leadership moments, like helping run a large Family and Community Engagement event, setting up vendors, coordinating logistics, and supporting families through workshops and resources.

At Riverview High School, student leadership isn’t a club, it’s a culture. And in the words of the ambassadors themselves, the mindsets are not just something they learn, they are something they live.

### About 7 Mindsets

Founded in 2009, 7 Mindsets provides a transformational framework for schools, districts, and organizations nationwide. The company offers mindset-based and mental health curricula, professional development, and data measurement tools that empower growth and drive measurable impact. Its highly effective programs, validated at ESSA Level 2 and ESSA Level 4, have been proven to improve student engagement, behavior, attendance, and academic achievement. 7 Mindsets has been used by over 5 million students and educators in all 50 states.