

First Little Aavidum Meeting

Use this outline as a reference for your first Aavidum meeting. Rather than having a regularly structured meeting, this is a moment to celebrate the unique group of student leaders that have been selected for this opportunity. It's a great chance to make the student leaders feel special by recognizing the ways they've already embodied the "I've got your back" message.

Create a celebratory atmosphere by putting on a fun, upbeat playlist. If it's within budget, consider getting the students a snack (being aware of all food allergies).

Once all students have arrived, lower the music.

Say: Welcome to Little Aavidum! Before we do anything else, I want you to know something important. You were invited to be part of this group for a reason. Adults in this school have noticed something special about you. It might be that you are kind, that you make people laugh, or that you notice when someone is having a hard day. Maybe it's because you're a good listener or because you include people. Maybe you are someone other students look up to. Maybe you have a lot of ideas. Maybe you don't always realize how much the people around you notice the way you treat others. Whatever the reason, we believe you have something important to contribute. You are now part of our school's Little Aavidum team!

Pause to give the students a round of applause.

Say: I know some of you already know each other, but some of you might not have gotten to know each other as well at school. I have something for each of you that will help us to get to recognize each person here.

Before the meeting, print a certificate (located in the resources folder) for each student. If time allows, take a quote from each student's nomination sheet or application and write it on their certificate. Give out the certificates to each student by name and read the quote about why they were selected. Publicly acknowledging each student's gifts models the types of activities Little Aavidum students will engage in and it will reinforce their positive behavior. Allow the rest of the group to cheer for each student as they're called to receive their certificate.

Once everyone has their certificate, **say:** Aavidum is a movement of students and adults who believe that everyone deserves to feel accepted, appreciated, acknowledged, and cared for. The word Aavidum was made up by students just like you and means "I've got your back." The goal of our club is to make sure that every student and every adult in our school knows that someone has their back and that they belong here. We will talk more about what it means to have someone's back. But for now, we're going to focus on noticing people, caring about people, and including people. This year, we're going to figure out what our school needs and how we can help make it a place where more people feel like they belong.

Ask: If you could change one thing about our school to help students feel more welcome, connected, or cared for, what would you change?

Write every idea down. Don't immediately evaluate them. Just have a large group brainstorm. No ideas are bad ideas.

Say: Today we're dreaming. We don't have to decide what we're actually going to do yet.

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Give students time to brainstorm.

Prompt with these questions:

- What do students at our school need?
- What do students wish adults knew?
- Where do students feel most connected?
- Where might students feel left out?
- What could make school more fun?
- What could help students get to know each other?
- What would make someone new feel welcome?

After spending some time recording ideas, **say**: Today is just the beginning. You are not here because we expect you to be perfect. You are here because we believe you can make a difference. This is your Little Aavidum. We're going to help you learn, plan, try things, make mistakes, try again, and make our school a little more caring along the way. Mostly importantly, remember that you matter, your ideas matter, and your actions matter. And this year, we're going to help more people in our school know that they matter too.

End the meeting on a high-energy note and let the students know when the next meeting will be.

The next meeting can be the "Introduction to Aavidum" meeting.