Academic Conversations

How to organise and conduct successful academic counselling:

Kelston Boys' High School

School profile: Kelston Boys' High School is an urban, single sex boys' school in West Auckland with a roll of approximately 800 students. The school has made great strides in implementing all aspects of the Starpath programme, as well as tremendous shifts to align daily operations to student success. During its time as a Starpath partner school, student achievement results across all levels have improved and the achievement gap between Māori and Pasifika students and their European peers has narrowed.

Organisation:
- Horizontal form classes (moved from vertical forms in 2014).
- Conducted by whānau teachers.
- 20 minutes daily four times per week, with 35 minutes on Wednesdays.
- "OneScreen" reports from the SMS are used to support academic counselling.
- Whānau teachers will follow their year group through the school.

What happens during academic counselling?
- Academic counsellors discuss goals, achievement progress, NCEA endorsements, attendance, study habits and data (asTTle/NCEA).
- Traffic light predictions in each subject are discussed with students.
- Publicly displayed credit updates serve as a catalyst for initiating student-teacher conversations around achievement and academic progress.

What makes the academic counselling approach successful?
- Students' sense of ownership of their learning and their focus on achievement improves.
- Conversations between teachers and students shift from focusing on behaviour to achievement.
- Academic counselling helps students to see an "image" of where they want to go in life, a "look into the future"
- Gives students a "reality check" with their academic progress to ensure they stay on track and continue to improve their achievement.

- Increases teachers' holistic understanding of students' achievement across subjects.
- Provides whānau teachers with a structure to strengthen relationships with students