

GET TO KNOW

Thompson Intermediate School



Tannis Griffin
School Leader

TYPE OF SCHOOL

Urban

LOCATION

Pasadena, TX
(Houston area)

TOTAL STUDENTS

800-900 students
in grades 7-8

THE VISION

Consistently put relationships front and center

What started as a post-pandemic need has blossomed into an ongoing mission at [Thompson Intermediate School](#) in the Houston area of Texas.

At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, Thompson's school leader Tannis Griffin recognized that students may need extra support when returning to in-person school. To figure out how students were thinking and feeling, she worked with her staff to survey their student body of middle schoolers.

Students anonymously answered questions about their level of happiness and stress, and how they relate to their teachers, peers, and family. The responses they received highlighted the need to focus on students' social and emotional health—they were nervous about being in school, were having difficulties processing the daily uncertainties of the world, and were concerned about their new and ongoing relationships.

Griffin opted to introduce Along to her staff as a way to prioritize student health. "I made it a priority to put relationships first," said Griffin. "My vision was that we've got to embed time in our school day to allow for

social emotional learning and for relationship building. The first step was to talk to my staff. We were all in agreement that we need to really put some time and effort into building relationships with our students."

THE STRATEGY

Teacher-student connections are part of weekly lesson plans

When Griffin's team met for their back to school professional development that summer, she modeled Along and the staff practiced using it. "We talked about meeting the kids where they are," she explained.

The teachers at Thompson opted to use Along once a week in their advisory classes. Through weekly check-ins, they could dive deeper into students' general concerns and further communicate one-on-one to build strong relationships.

"It's super important to know each student because each student comes from a different background, has different learning needs, and has different social emotional needs," said Kelli Moneyhun, Thompson's assistant principal. "With Along, we'd be able to learn how to teach them better and build stronger relationships with them."

THE IMPACT

School culture improves and students feel seen

Over the course of the first school year using Along, Thompon educators sent 1,268 reflection questions, which led to over 9,000 response reflections and a 95% response rate by students.

And, due to this level of impact in its first year, the staff at Thompson have continued to use Along in each subsequent school year.

As 7th grade student Jacob G. shared, "What I like about Along is you can finally express the feelings that you have been holding in. I feel like I am trusting [my teacher] even more."

"I like how I am close to my homeroom teacher," said 8th grade student Kenya D. "She asks us questions, I respond with other questions about her, and it's a back and forth conversation about what we like. It's a way to get to know my teacher on a deeper level. It makes me feel welcome at school and that I'm not left out or an outsider in class."