

Houck ENVoY Testimonials, May 17, 2018

"Learning the skills and research associated with ENVoY has taken my instructional mentoring to a whole new level. Not only has it given me concrete labels for the subtle strategies that highly proficient teachers use, it has given me coaching tools to teach and reinforce these strategies even better. All of the teachers I have supported with an ENVoY focus have reported that their classroom management has improved and they have more time and energy for content." – **Stacey Figgins**, Instructional Mentor, Houck Middle School

"I'd like to express my appreciation for the ENVoY training I've had. I'm a 17 year veteran and known for my classroom management, and I still found great value in the ENVoY trainings I attended. The observations and feedback are so valuable to me. I've even been inspired to research how I might be an ENVoY trainer someday."

ENVoY strategies have really changed my teaching. The Exit Directions have helped me form and guide my lessons and have been amazing in keeping my students on task. Every strategy I have used has worked exactly as I learned, when I did it right."

I hope the district will continue to provide Envoy trainings. I feel it has benefited teachers of all experience levels and student success." – **Cyndi Swaney**, 6th Grade Writing, Houck Middle School

"This year has been especially amazing as I have been able to make the 7 Gems from ENVoY more of a habit in my teaching practice. I spend way more time teaching content and way less time managing behaviors. I look forward to becoming an ENVoY certified teacher." – **Tiffany Berkovitz**, Read180 and Writing Intervention, Houck Middle School

"ENVoY has dramatically helped with classroom management and cut down on the number of distractions that happen in class. I was pretty burned-out after the first 6 weeks of teaching, and the ENVoY trainings made it manageable to get to the end of the year. Hopefully I can start next school year using the strategies right out of the gate." – **Brian Martz**, 7th Grade Math, Houck Middle School

"ENVoY has truly made the difference for many students. It has enabled me to maximize my instructional time and support students. I am strong in content, and having supportive and effective classroom management tools helps strengthen the instruction that I can offer students."

The stress level in (most) classrooms is lowered because I am spending less time ‘managing’ and far more time teaching and conferring with small groups/individuals.

During my years in Curriculum, I took an ENVoY class because I wanted to know what it was. After 7 years in Curriculum, I have returned to the classroom (grade 6. Title/school of poverty) and began to put ENVoY to use. I find consistently implementing strategies enables students to be much more independent and self-reliant.

*As the latest behavior fads come/go, I hope ENVoY is here to stay. It is one consistent piece of teacher learning that can have a profound positive effect on instruction – regardless of grade/content.” – **Lesli Ficker**, Math 180, Houck Middle School*

*“When I was a first year teacher 5 years ago, I was fortunate to be able to take advantage of the mentor program. One of the course offerings I took was ENVoY, which has changed my success with classroom management serving very challenging students. I only wish I had been able to implement it more completely, sooner, but it is, like any good strategy, something that takes practice. Having the opportunity to take ENVoY multiple times (and the other suite of ENVoY classes from the ENVoY Classroom Management Trilogy) has helped me not only to survive teaching in a difficult climate, but to begin to thrive. I have no doubt that it was one key component to me being able to survive the typical 5 year teacher burn out we hear so much about. Please continue to offer it in our district. This is one item in a teacher's toolbox that can be immediately and systematically put into effect, even while taking the course. Teachers who can more successfully manage a classroom can have more time to teach, have more students learning, and do it without becoming stressed to the point of burnout.” - **Ellen Puglisi-Babe**, Language Arts and Science, Houck Middle School*

*“As a second-year teacher, ENVoY has been instrumental in my success in the classroom, as well as the success of my students. I have taken all three components of ENVoY (more than once) and I plan to take them again, if offered. ENVoY is the foundation of my practice. I use it every minute of every class as I work to manage, teach, and maintain relationships with my students, even the most challenging ones. My instruction and classroom culture would not be nearly as successful without the consistent use of ENVoY in my room, as well as throughout the building.”- **Forrest Miller**, Language Arts 180, Houck Middle School*

“The beginning of my year at Houck Middle School was a disaster. It felt like every word that came out of my mouth created chaos. Chaos I did not experience at my previous middle school. Whether I gave directions, told a funny anecdote, or disciplined....the type of words did not matter to my students. I realized I was in WAY over my head and I had no idea how to fix what was broken.

ENVoY retrained me to establish a peaceful community without having to use “words”. My body language, my breathing, my gestures meant more to my students than what I had to say. I had no idea that NOT speaking was so much more powerful than using my voice.

Using the power of controlled breathing, selected gestures, slowed down movements, and language made visual, allowed me to reconnect with my students, gain their trust, and establish a healthy class.

*I firmly believe that all people prefer order over chaos. But how to create that peaceful order from chaos? This is what ENVoY taught me.” – **Stephanie Andrus**, Language Arts, Houck Middle School*

“ENVoY strategies are essential for teaching today’s middle schooler. I have been a teacher for 20 years, and have participated in countless professional development programs. This one is immediately useful, and produces dramatic results. It decreases student confusion, student discipline problems and increases student calm and ability to self-manage.

*I only wish I could have had this training earlier.” – **Aaron Ford**, Science, Houck Middle School*

*“Implementation of the ENVoY strategies has made my first year of teaching much less stressful. Using these tools has greatly reduced my inclination of getting into power struggles with students. This is even more true considering I am a special education teacher who works with students who are often quite behaviorally challenging. I feel less burnout because I use less energy managing behavior, allowing me more time to teach, which is what I most enjoy. I also appreciate having easy access to on-site ENVoY coaches to help maintain, and improve, my non-verbal communication skills.” – **David Lowery**, LRC Intern Teacher, Houck Middle School*

*“ENVoY has helped me become a better teacher, because I know how to read my class better. I know what works to get their attention quickly, I can redirect one student without anyone else knowing what is happening, and my students are more productive. ENVoY has given me the strategies to efficiently manage my classroom without always using my voice; it’s helped me become a more confident educator.” – **Stephanie Snyder**, 6th Grade Language Arts and AVID Coordinator*

“As a licensed teacher with nearly 10 years of experience in a Title 1 school, I cannot help but express how important a role ENVoY has played in the successes I have experienced with students of poverty. No other strategy or system has impacted my classroom more. ENVoY is an essential component for improving classroom management, school climate, and

*student engagement.” – **Brandon Law**, 7th Grade Science, 8th Grade AVID Excel, Advisory Coordinator, Houck Middle School*

*“ENVoY is truly a time and sanity saver. Before ENVoY, I was constantly struggling with classroom management and interpersonal relationships with my students. With ENVoY, I have learned critical management skills that minimize the amount of energy that I expend each class period. I am no longer pulling my hair out and am proud that my relationships have continued to strengthen as I am able to get around and to tend to individual student needs much quicker and more effectively. ENVoY is definitely worth the time as it provides everyone (not just educators) with practical tools necessary to succeed in any given situation.” – **Erik Shimizu**, Social Studies, AVID, Houck Middle School*

“What is one of the most crucial skill sets for teachers and, yet, is perhaps the most glossed over topic in many teacher preparation programs? Classroom management skills are a vital component in any teacher’s tool belt. Despite this, many teachers enter their careers with little to no effective training in managing and leading a classroom. ENVoY fills this gap by empowering educators to not only read nonverbal communication, but to use those nonverbals during instruction to help students achieve excellence. ENVoY is not just a program. It is a philosophy that allows me to teach more effectively and more efficiently, resulting in the maximum stewardship of our precious instructional time.

In addition, the nonverbal skills taught through ENVoY also build the health of my classroom. Using the nonverbal strategies and philosophies taught by ENVoY, I am able to make the most of class time and to provide clearer expectations for students. This gives them the chance to form a healthier group knowing that the expectations are clear. This, in turn, allows students more time to learn and with less frustration. As a result, I can expend more of my energy in teaching and less for putting out the flames of misbehavior and misunderstanding. As a result, I go home with more energy and students are given a calmer learning environment with less ambiguity and guesswork. Better relationships with students is a pleasant side effect.

*In a nutshell, ENVoY has provided me with the most essential classroom skills I could ask for by giving me the tools to focus on student learning. I am more effective and my students have a healthier classroom. The strategies gained have been invaluable both for me and my students. Instead of carrying the weight of teaching at arms’ length, ENVoY allows me to put it in a backpack and move freely. I can genuinely state that ENVoY is, hands down, the single most valuable training my district has provided toward both my success and the success of my students. Thanks ENVoY!” – **Paul Johnson**, 7th Grade Language Arts, Houck Middle School*

"I wanted to share with you how much I have enjoyed all of my ENVoY trainings this year. As an IA, I find myself interacting with the students in many different settings. In the classroom, I am able to mirror the ENVoY being used by the teacher. This keeps things consistent and therefore more helpful. In the cafeteria, ENVoY implementation has helped lower the escalation of behaviors and noise levels. Finally, with the implementation of our new hallway traffic flow, ENVoY has helped take me out of the mix of power struggles with kids. With ENVoY I can, with my visual signs, simply direct traffic.

ENVoY has made some noticeable improvements here at Houck. I am hopeful that continued training will be available next year for all staff. Thank you, ENVoY, for all of your support."

Debbie von Weller, Bilingual IA, Houck Middle School