

Schools Pursuing Excellence District-Wide Meeting Notes
January 28, 2008

Lessons Learned

- Meeting one time a month too often – changed to every other month
- One meeting including all departments – bonus: everyone hears the same message
- Having subs at school sites has been a good support
 - Allowed for additional support for teachers
 - Additional grade level meeting times due to subs being at the site
- Being an employee at a school with special needs is different than being a school without those needs
- Opportunities for additional support i.e. RTI training at Jackson
- District has been very supportive of schools. Chain of communication has been successful
- Fostered new collaborations between departments
- To better support schools individual needs of school sites for substitutes should be known – email qjackson@pusd.us with individual needs
- This process has illustrated the difference between equity and equality
- There are times when identifying the right support is difficult
- Communication is still difficult – proper placement for 9th graders is still a problem
- Training for staff has been beneficial
- Sometimes it's necessary to focus meetings on one issue to really solve a problem
- Reading the logs or having logs has increased communication, accountability and responsibilities
- Process has brought to light some processes, i.e. referrals to special education and has streamlined this process from SSTs, interventions, etc.
- Across school sites Math coaches were being used differently – heightened the role of all
- Teams are effective because of their diversity – departments are “crossing over”
- Bridges are being built between departments
- FTEs based on need or numbers (i.e. psychologists at schools). It's not about equality but rather equity. Schools with large populations of students who are foster kids/group home residents
- We still have some lessons to learn!
 - Awareness of problematic systems
 - Students (many) need a connection.

Best Practices

- Awareness of time spent on operational issues: detract from instruction
- Realization of need to change expectation for students
- Understanding of issues that schools are dealing with
- Started a log of SSTs, suspensions, sent out, behavior problems, etc.
 - Conclusions: teacher behaviors/awareness
 - 2 hour IEPs
 - Needed Professional Development

- High school need to know relevance of diploma
 - Vocational and other
- Visiting students at their group homes
- Resources have been identified and planned for a school as a result of Schools Pursuing Excellence team connections
- Focus on student engagement and working successfully
- Mental health services for staff under distress to refocus staff
- Focus on important activities and filter out “distractions”
- Focus on our goal: improvement of instruction – teaching behaviors are changing not just more of the same

What Can We Do Better

- Allow math coaches to support other teachers in schools. Let teachers know this help is available.
- Diversity training is needed. High school counselors can help with this.
- Sensitivity for staff to address parents, teachers, students.
- How can we help principals with operational issues? Principals can focus on instruction and morale.
- Increase inter team collaboration and “cross talk.”
- Improve relationship with Sheriff’s Department
- Invite community into this group to make them aware of our efforts
- Find a way to get all Central Office staff into the schools for a better understanding of the issues.
- Look more closely at the transition