Harbor Heights Middle School

FINAL REPORT

New York City Department of Education External School Curriculum Audit | August 2011

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Contents

Introduction

About This Report

This final report is the result of an external school curriculum audit (ESCA) of Harbor Heights Middle School conducted by Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research. This audit was conducted in response to the school being identified as in need of improvement under the New York State Education Department differentiated accountability plan, pursuant to the accountability requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act. The utilized ESCA process was developed for and carried out under the auspices of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Office of School Development, within the Division of Portfolio Planning.

About Harbor Heights Middle School

Harbor Heights Middle School (M349) is located in New York City, in Community School District 6 in Manhattan. The school serves approximately 158 students in Grades 6 to 8. At this school, 97 percent of the students are English language learners and 4 percent are identified as students with disabilities. Harbor Heights Middle School shares a school building with P.S. 173 (PreK–5).

In 2009–10, Harbor Heights Middle School did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in English language arts (ELA) for all students, Hispanic or Latino subgroup, students with limited English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged students. In 2010–11, Harbor Heights Middle School's state accountability status was designated as Improvement (Year 1).[1] Because of this designation, the school participated in an ESCA. Data collection for the audit took place from February through June of 2011.

Harbor Heights Middle School was opened on July 1, 2006, and the 2006–07 school year was the first in which the school had students. According to the school's 2010–11 Comprehensive Educational Plan, "Our five year old school was founded in response to the community's request for a small middle school environment where Spanish-speaking newcomers to the country could be provided with targeted language-specific instruction and culturally appropriate support" (p. 5).[2]

The school provides its students with transitional bilingual classes. Before a student enrolls at the school, the specifics of the transitional bilingual program are shared with the parents and student to ensure that the school is the best fit for the individual.

Some of the students attending Harbor Heights Middle School are students with interrupted formal education (SIFE). According to the Language Allocation Policy for 2010–11, there are 22 SIFE currently enrolled at Harbor Heights Middle School (p. 50).

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[1] https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2010/24/AOR-2010-310600010349.pdf. Accessed on March 3, 2011

[2] http://schools.nyc.gov/documents/oaosi/cep/2010-11/cep_M349.pdf. Accessed on July 6, 2011

Being identified as a school in need of Improvement (Year 1), the co-interpretation participants from Harbor Heights Middle School embraced the process to identify ways in which their school could better meet the needs of the unique population it serves.

Audit Process at Harbor Heights Middle School

The ESCA approach utilized at the middle school level examines five topic areas: student engagement, curriculum and instruction, academic interventions and supports, professional learning and collaboration, and support for transitioning students. Data were collected at the school level through teacher surveys, administrator interviews, classroom observations, and an analysis of documents submitted by Harbor Heights Middle School. From these data, Learning Point Associates prepared a series of or reports for the school's use.

These reports were presented to the school at a co-interpretation[SM] meeting on May 24, 2011. During this meeting, six stakeholders from the Harbor Heights Middle School community read the reports. Through a facilitated and collaborative group process, they identified individual findings, then developed and prioritized key findings that emerged from information in the reports.

The remainder of this report presents the key findings that emerged from the co-interpretation process and the actionable recommendations that Learning Point Associates developed in response. Please note that there is not necessarily a one-to-one connection between key findings and recommendations; rather, the key findings are considered as a group, and the recommended strategies are those that we believe are most likely to have the greatest positive impact on student performance at Harbor Heights Middle School.

Key Findings

After considerable thought and discussion, co-interpretation participants determined a set of key findings. The wording of the key findings that follows matches the wording developed and agreed upon by co-interpretation participants at the meeting. These key findings are detailed in this section.

Critical Key Findings

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 1:

Multiple sources of data are collected; however, there is no system in place to access and analyze it.

Critical Key Finding 1 is supported by information from school interviews and a review of school-submitted documents. Harbor Heights Middle School is responsible for collecting most information on new students, including conducting comprehensive diagnostic assessments, completing background interviews with family, and determining students' past schooling experience. However, this information is not stored centrally, and while interviews stated that information was available to staff, there was no evidence to suggest a consistent or systemic means of sharing student data. Similarly, monitoring of student progress is accomplished through multiple sources of information, but there was no evidence of a systemic approach to monitoring student progress.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 2:

There is not a consistently high level of instructional rigor; rather, most observations indicate a low- to mid-range rating for instructional rigor.

Critical Key Finding 2 is supported by information from teacher survey results and classroom observations. In the majority of classrooms observed (92 percent), the teacher sometimes facilitated students' use of higher-level thinking skills (analysis and problem solving) through the application of knowledge and skills. However, this did not happen frequently or consistently and classrooms were sometimes more focused on students getting the right answers than furthering their thinking or understanding. Overall, teachers present new knowledge, highlight the essentials, provide some examples, and explain content in a manner that students understand. However, focus of the class is only sometimes on meaningful discussion and making connections to broad concepts, organizing ideas, or making connections to real-world applications and understanding. In observed classrooms, teachers provided a few loops to further student understanding, but this feedback was sometimes perfunctory or nonexistent. Teachers encouraged student effort but did not always prompt students to explain their thinking. Teacher survey results also suggested a mixed level of student activities. Teachers reported textbook or worksheet questions and notebook reflection were the most frequently assigned activities.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 3:

There is no evidence that departmental or individual professional development (PD) is driven by data or measured for impact on student learning.

Critical Key Finding 3 is supported by information from school interviews and review of school-submitted documents. Interview respondents stated that professional development is based on underlying language needs of students and connected to the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals, including a focus on second language development. There is a professional development plan; however, is it not clear whether there is a scope and sequence of events. This plan includes assessments of what seems to be implementation of professional development activities; however, this is also not clearly communicated within the document. No evidence of connections to data or student learning are discussed within the plan, and are, therefore, not evident.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 4:

There are inconsistencies in the description and execution of the Discipline Plan and Behavior Modification Plan.

Critical Key Finding 4 is supported by information from teacher survey results, school interviews, and review of school-submitted documents. School documents describe the Harbor Heights Middle School School Discipline Plan, including the school behavior policy, consequences, and rewards. Although the plan states that it is merits based, merits are not described in the Harbor Heights Middle School School Discipline Plan. The plan does not include information on communicating the school's Discipline Plan or expectations, consequences, and rewards to students or families. The lack of a documented procedure for sharing expectations and consequences may be further evidenced by teacher survey results. Sixty percent of surveyed teachers agreed or strongly agreed that strategies used for managing behavior are consistent with those used throughout the school; forty percent of teachers disagreed or were not sure.

Positive Key Findings

POSITIVE KEY FINDING 1:

There are multiple opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development, and teachers are encouraged to implement professional development in classroom instruction.

Positive Key Finding 1 is supported by information from teacher survey results, school interviews, and review of school-submitted documents. Harbor Heights Middle School teachers have many professional development opportunities available, including professional learning communities, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and Reading Instructional Goals for Older Readers (RIGOR). For the most part, teachers indicated satisfaction with the professional development provided, specifically in terms of coherence, consistency, and connection to school goals and student needs. Further, all teachers indicated that their principal expects them to implement what they have learned in professional development.

POSITIVE KEY FINDING 2:

Teachers engage in multiple opportunities for collaboration.

Positive Key Finding 2 is supported by information from teacher survey results and review of school-submitted documents. School documents indicate teachers participate in regularly scheduled content and grade team meetings (professional learning communities) to perform action research, curriculum planning, and data analysis. This is further evidenced by teacher survey results, wherein all teachers reported that opportunities are provided for teacher learning and collaboration. Survey results also suggest all teachers in this school participate in collaborative conversations.

Recommendations

Overview of Recommendations

As detailed in the Key Findings section, participants at the Harbor Heights Middle School co-interpretation meeting prioritized some key findings that highlighted strengths of the school (Positive Key Findings 1 and 2) and other key findings that focused on areas in which the school can improve (Critical Key Findings 1, 2, 3, and 4).

THE FOUR RECOMMENDATIONS

With these issues in mind, Learning Point Associates auditors developed the following four recommendations.

1. Provide clear expectations and support for the schoolwide use of student achievement data for planning and delivering instruction.
2. Implement instructional strategies that increase opportunities for higher-order thinking, analysis and problem solving, and deeper content understanding.
3. Develop and implement a professional development plan that is aligned to school goals, and focused on subject area content. Professional learning opportunities should be aligned to the following areas identified during the co-interpretation phase of the ESCA process: data use, instructional rigor, and/or implementing the positive behavioral management system.
4. Develop and implement a schoolwide positive behavior policy and system with clearly established standards for safety, discipline, and respect. The policy and related system should include concise social expectations and a continuum of supports, interventions, incentives/rewards, and consequences—including a clear delineation of activities and programs that students are entitled to versus those that are privileges.

These four recommendations are discussed on the following pages. Each recommendation provides a review of research, online resources for additional information, specific actions the school may wish to take during its implementation process, and examples of real-life schools that have successfully implemented strategies. All works cited, as well as suggestions for further reading, appear in the References section at the end of this report.

Please note that the order in which these recommendations are presented does not reflect a ranking or prioritization of the recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Systematic Use of Data to Inform Instruction

Provide clear expectations and support for the schoolwide use of student achievement data for planning and delivering instruction.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Student assessment data are an essential tool in measuring the effectiveness of instruction; teachers can use these data to ensure the success of all students.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making* (Hamilton et al., 2009) includes the following school-level recommendations regarding data use to improve instruction:

- "Establish a clear vision for schoolwide data use."
- "Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school."
- "Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement." (p. 9)

Clear Vision for Schoolwide Data Use. Learning Point Associates and Educational Service Agency Alliance of the Midwest (2006) emphasize the need to do the following:

Make sure all staff members understand what their core responsibilities are and what their obligations are for learning to do that work better. Understanding this will make a big difference in how staff will seek, manipulate, present, and use data. (p. 21)

The principal and school leaders also should set the example of using data regularly. A study of the effects of leadership practices on student achievement by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003) shows "the extent to which the principal monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student achievement" to be one of the 21 leadership responsibilities significantly associated with student achievement (p. 12). Cotton (1988) agrees, "The careful monitoring of student progress is shown in the literature to be one of the major factors differentiating effective schools and teachers from ineffective ones" (p. 1).

Supports That Foster a Data-Driven Culture Within the School. Cultivating a culture of reflection and continuous improvement will help teachers feel comfortable using data. Young's (2008) case studies identify "four dimensions of trust" that suggest how culture may or may not support teachers using the data system. To the degree that teachers think in terms of these four dimensions, they will be more likely to utilize a data system:

- "Other teachers have high standards."
- "Other teachers won't think I'm incompetent."
- "Others will participate/reciprocate in response to my engagement."
- "Problems I raise will be seen as collective problems." (p. 99)

Time also is an important factor in professional support. Teacher respondents cited in a U.S. Department of Education report on data use most often cited "lack of time to examine

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (Website)
http://www.cal.org/create/

Children First Intensive (Website)
http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/resources/childrenfirst/

Doing What Works: Providing Research-Based Education Practices Online (Website)
http://dww.ed.gov/

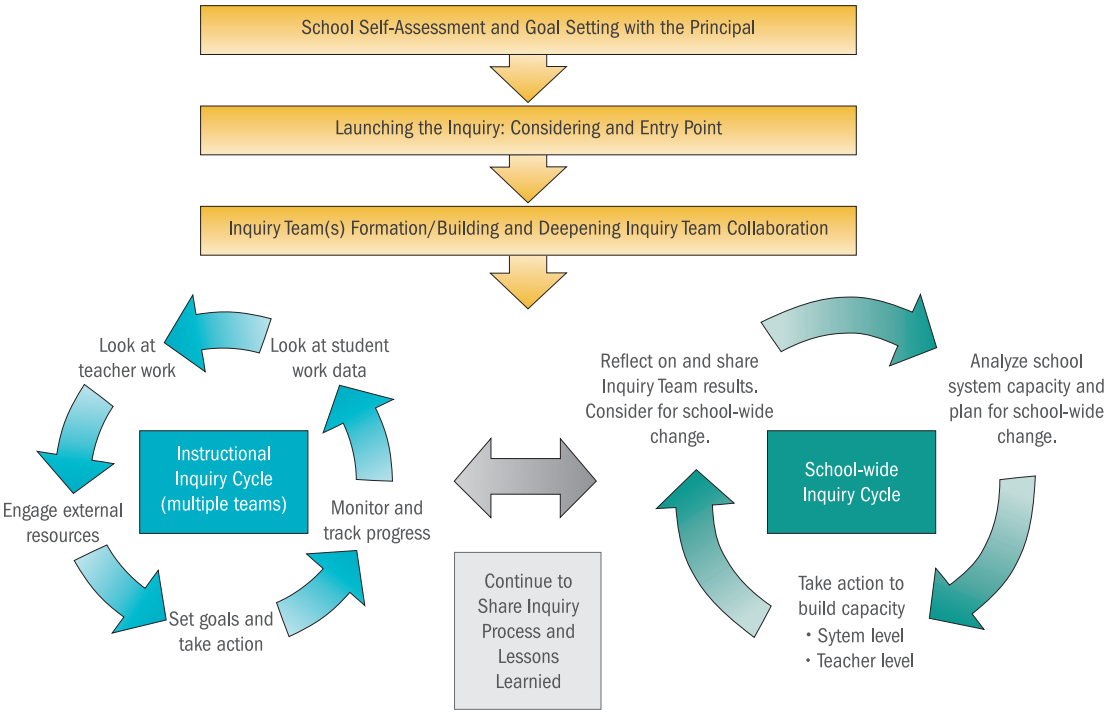
Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making (Publication)
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dddm_pg_092909.pdf

and reflect on data [as] the greatest barrier to data-driven decision making" (Means, Padilla, & Gallagher, 2010, p. 87).

Finally, "teachers need to learn how to obtain and manage data, ask good questions, accurately analyze data, and apply data results appropriately and ethically" (Lachat & Smith, 2005, p. 336). Through professional development and coaching, the school can support teachers in meeting these goals.

Data as Part of an Ongoing Cycle of Instructional Improvement. The NYCDOE Children First Intensive professional development plan established school-level Inquiry Teams at each school to support student achievement. NYCDOE uses the following graphic (see Figure 1) to illustrate the ongoing process of collaborative inquiry.

Figure 1. Collaborative Inquiry Process



Source: New York City Department of Education (2011a)

NYCDOE (2011a) defines *collaborative inquiry* as "a sustained process of investigation and action by a group of educators that empowers teachers to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. Collaborative inquiry can look very different in different contexts, but there are some common threads across all teams, mainly that teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their collective work through the lens of student work and data."

Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners. As Harbor Heights Middle School serves many English language learners (ELLs), it is important to pay particular attention to appropriate ELL student measures to determine appropriate progress. In order to ensure that educators are making decisions using the most accurate and appropriate data for ELLs, it is essential that assessments are valid and reliable for ELLs and that the process takes into account, as much as possible, an assessment of skills in the native language (Echevarria &

Hasbrouck, 2009). Studies of basic reading assessments and procedures for identifying ELLs who are struggling with reading have found these assessments to be reliable and valid for ELLs (Linan-Thompson, Cirino, & Vaughn, 2007), but other studies of standardized academic achievement measures, that are normed for native English speakers, have lower validity and reliability for ELLs (Abedi, 2004).

The National Literacy Panel also found that many existing assessments do a poor job of providing high-quality information about the individual strengths and weaknesses of ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006). Assessment results may underestimate the level of ELLs' content knowledge because, although students may understand the concept, they might not understand the English language in the assessment item about that concept. In fact, the test might be measuring students' language proficiency in English more than their knowledge of the content. As a result, Harbor Heights Middle School leaders should ensure that they use multiple sources of data to make decisions, use caution when selecting assessment measures, and assess ELLs, as much as possible, in ways that separate language proficiency from the concept or skill that is being measured (Abedi, 2004; Echevarria & Hasbrouck, 2009).

Despite the challenges of assessing ELLs appropriately, in the most effective programs for ELLs, educators have frequent access to data from regular assessments of student progress and there is a commitment to use this data to diagnose and respond to student needs on an ongoing basis (Horowitz et al., 2009; Parrish, Perez, Merickel, & Linquanti, 2006; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007; Williams et al., 2007).

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Create a school culture of reflection and continuous improvement.** School leaders play an important role in creating a school culture of reflection and continuous improvement.
   - Assign teachers to grade-level and/or subject-specific collaborative inquiry teams, if they do not already exist, to analyze schoolwide data and grade-level/subject-specific data.
   - Identify how the work of collaborative inquiry teams will align with the schoolwide goals developed as part of the collaborative inquiry cycle, and as required for the Comprehensive Education Plan.
   - Set aside time for collaborative data analysis. This analysis can take place during existing teacher collaboration time or could be done through inquiry teams.
   - Develop a standard data analysis protocol and schedule.
   - Provide resources to support teacher collaboration on data analysis, such as tracking sheets and/or a data coach.
2. **Set clear expectations for data use.** Establish clear expectations regarding teacher use of data.
   - Establish a yearly, schoolwide schedule for assessments and screening procedures (e.g., three times each year).

- Identify assessment instrument(s) that will be used to track student achievement and the development of language proficiency in English. Screening instruments should be valid, reliable, and aligned with grade-level curriculum based on learning standards (e.g., state assessments, Acuity predictive assessments, or instructionally targeted assessments) or subject-specific and researched-based assessments (e.g., Woodcock-Johnson III Diagnostic Reading Battery, Qualitative Reading Inventory, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills).
- Ensure that assessments are valid and reliable for ELLs and that the process takes into account, as much as possible, an assessment of skills in the native language. These assessments should be used to identify students who need additional support and to pinpoint their instructional needs.
- Use a variety of data to place ELLs appropriately and inform their instruction. Gather as much information as possible about the students' native language proficiency, native language education level, general educational experiences, English language proficiency, level of content knowledge, and social or emotional needs. Based on the needs of each student, educators should design a personalized menu of supports and interventions that will help students to improve their mastery of grade-level academic content at the same time that they increase their proficiency in English. Ensure that assessment results are shared with teachers in a timely way and that teachers have access to assessment results, if assessment results are not readily available on the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS).
- Describe how the school, teams, and individual teachers will be expected to use data (e.g., set goals, align resources, modify scope and sequence, identify students for tutoring, target students in lesson plans).
- Provide professional development as needed on topics such as data analysis, item analysis, and instructional strategies.

3. **Provide training on instructional strategies and differentiation.** "Just having student data is not sufficient if teachers do not have ideas about how to teach differently based on student performance" (Means et al., 2010, p. 87).
   - Provide professional development on instructional strategies and differentiation to give teachers a wealth of instructional options that they can call on to meet student needs.
   - Train teachers to differentiate instruction and student supports to appropriately and effectively meet the individual needs of ELLs. The types of supports provided and the amount of time for additional instructional supports should be explicitly linked to the learning needs identified during the assessment process.
   - Adjust classroom instruction based on student progress. The IES Practice Guide *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making* (Hamilton et al., 2009) identifies the following changes to instruction that teachers can make to improve student achievement:
     - "Prioritizing instructional time;
     - Targeting additional individual instruction for students who are struggling with particular topics;

- More easily identifying individual students' strengths and instructional interventions that can help students continue to progress;
- Gauging the instructional effectiveness of classroom lessons;
- Refining instructional methods; and
- Examining schoolwide data to consider whether and how to adapt the curriculum based on information about students' strengths and weaknesses." (p. 5)

4. **Monitor progress.** Track implementation of schoolwide data use policies to ensure that they are being implemented consistently and to provide teachers with continuous feedback and appropriate support.
   - Establish a system of multiple methods for ensuring that teacher teams have what they need to engage in regular data analysis to inform instruction. This system could include inquiry team data logs, teacher reflection sheets on instructional strategies, and/or reports from the data coach.
   - Consider implementing classroom walk-throughs by administrators, a lead teacher, or the data coach to see how data analysis and professional development are impacting classroom practice and to identify the best ways to support teachers moving forward. The intention of this process is formative teacher feedback to improve instruction—not to penalize teachers; thus, the school may wish to work collaboratively with its instructional staff to develop a related classroom walk-through protocol. By building in feedback loops, the school can ensure that effective decisions are being made, based on data. As Learning Point Associates and the Educational Service Agency Alliance of the Midwest (2006) state:

     > Data make change visible. Data provide an empirical lens that magnifies objective detail while distancing us from personality. Data can confirm if there is change or not. The smaller, the tighter, the more frequent the feedback loops that the data system supports, the more staff can make decisions, the more frequently decisions can be made, and the more likely that the decisions made will be better ones. (p. 5)

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Shotwell Middle School

Shotwell Middle School, located in Houston, Texas, serves 1,200 students in Grades 7 and 8. Approximately 78 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The school has had success in using data systemically to inform instruction.

> Administration and staff [at Shotwell Middle School] regularly collaborate in using data to support instructional decision making and assess program effectiveness. The administrative team provides leadership and clarifies expectations for data use, and core subject skills specialists support teachers in the process....
>
> Data from six-week benchmark assessments are maintained in the districtwide data warehouse system, where teachers can access reports and analyze data during their departmental common planning time....
>
> Skills specialists provide extensive support to teachers in using data and planning instruction. They meet with teachers weekly to analyze data, provide expert guidance and resources for lesson planning and instruction, and help to determine appropriate instructional strategies. The school engages in a clearly articulated reteach/retest policy in which teachers gather by department for an item-by-item test analysis. Based on the number of students who are missing objectives, the teachers identify areas of concern and steps for reteaching....
>
> Administrators and skills specialists also use data to find areas of improvement for teachers. Using a standard format, teachers enter their lesson plans into a districtwide data warehouse system. Here, administrators and specialists can review the lesson plans and assess the instructional strategies planned. The school also uses a standard format for entering comments from observations of lessons. Based on alignment among lesson plans, observations, and student data, administrators and specialists can help teachers adjust their instructional strategies...
>
> Staff conducts universal screening for Response to Intervention (RTI) to address three areas: the district's population of English language learners and students from low-income families, the state's high rate of dropout, and student migration. Screening results for RTI are entered into a database that creates reports indicating where students score in relation to grade-level averages. These data are then examined in conjunction with results on benchmark assessments and [the Texas state test]. Students who achieve below the average ranges are provided interventions with classroom, special education, and/or RTI teachers through a pull-out program or small-group instruction in the classroom. Each week, the RTI teacher conducts progress monitoring to determine ongoing student progress and continued areas of need. When students exit the pullout program, they complete the Exit Survey and Reflection. This survey asks students about which assignments helped them master the content, why these assignments were helpful, how challenging the assignments were, and how the pull-out program could be improved. Teachers review these surveys and make appropriate changes to the program.

Description excerpted from the from the *Doing What Works* website at http://dww.ed.gov/media/DDI/DDDM/TopicLevel/case_shotwell_revised.pdf. This information is in the public domain.

Recommendation 2: Instructional Rigor

Implement instructional strategies that increase opportunities for higher-order thinking, analysis and problem solving, and deeper content understanding.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Instruction that pushes students to engage in higher-level thinking leads to deeper learning for students (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001; Pashler et al., 2007). Too often, particularly in schools where students are struggling, instruction focuses on lower-level thinking skills, basic content, and test preparation. Teachers of struggling student groups or tracks usually offer students "less exciting instruction, less emphasis on meaning and conceptualization, and more rote drill and practice activities" than do teachers of high-performing or heterogeneous groups and classes (Cotton, 1989, p. 8). Yet this focus on basic skills does not necessarily improve student achievement.

Several research studies were completed from 1990 to 2003 "which demonstrated that students who experienced higher levels of authentic instruction and assessment showed higher achievement than students who experienced lower levels of authentic instruction and assessment" (Newmann, King, & Carmichael, 2007, p. vii). These results included higher achievement on standardized tests (Newmann et al., 2001). It is also important to note that these results "were consistent for Grades 3–12, across different subject areas (mathematics, social studies, language arts, science), and for different students regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status" (Newmann et al., 2007, p. vii).

Teachers need to provide structured opportunities and time for students to take on higher-level cognitive work (Tomlinson, 2003). In discussing the *gradual release of responsibility model*, Fisher and Frey (2008) state that "the cognitive load should shift slowly and purposefully from teacher-as-model, to joint responsibility, to independent practice and application by the learner" (p. 2). This process allows students to become what Graves and Fitzgerald (2003) call "competent, independent learners" (p. 98).

There are several steps to ensure that students are being asked to complete this type of intellectually challenging work, which increases test scores and improves performance on authentic assessment measures as well. Newmann et al. (2001) define *authentically challenging intellectual work* as the "construction of knowledge, through the use of disciplined inquiry, to produce discourse, products, or performances that have value beyond school" (p. 14).

Daggett (2005) agrees, stating that all students should be pushed "to achieve academic excellence, which ultimately boils down to applying rigorous knowledge to unpredictable, real-world situations, such as those that drive our rapidly changing world" (p. 5). Disciplined inquiry, which occurs in the classroom, requires that students "(1) use a prior knowledge base; (2) strive for in-depth understanding rather than superficial awareness; and (3) express their ideas and findings with elaborated communication" (Newmann et al., 2001, p. 15).

Meeting the Needs of ELLs. The findings of the National Literacy Panel and of subsequent research suggest that what educators know about good instruction and curriculum, in general, holds true for ELLs as well. As is the case with non-ELLs, ELLs also benefit from

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth – Executive summary (Publication)
http://www.cal.org/projects/archive/nlpreports/executive_summary.pdf

Doing What Works: Providing Research-Based Education Practices Online (Website)
http://dww.ed.gov/

Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Learning (Publication)
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/20072004.pdf

high expectations; clear goals and learning objectives; a challenging, content-rich curriculum; appropriately paced instruction that is informed by data from formative assessments; and opportunities to practice and apply new concepts and skills.

For ELLs, a rigorous curriculum that will prepare them for postsecondary success must also include high-quality literacy instruction. Researchers have found that effective instruction for ELLs is, in many ways, similar to effective literacy instruction for native English speakers in that it covers the essential components of literacy, such as: phonemic awareness, decoding, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing (August & Shanahan, 2006, 2010; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Moreover, effective instruction for ELLs is comprehensive, in that it covers all of the reading components rather than focusing solely on one element, includes explicit and systematic instruction, provides frequent opportunities to practice the target skill and receive feedback, and incorporates language support to build oral language proficiency (Linan-Thompson, Cirino, & Vaughn, 2007). However, there are two important qualifications to this finding. First, instructional approaches that are effective with native English speakers, although also successful with ELLs, have a smaller impact. Second, the research reviewed by the National Literacy Panel demonstrated that although ELLs, with appropriate instruction, can perform at the same level as native English speakers in word-level skills, such as decoding, they often fall behind on text-level skills, such as reading comprehension. Given this gap, it is important to note that well-developed oral proficiency in English is associated with more highly developed reading comprehension and writing skills in English. As a result, comprehensive literacy programs for ELLs should begin with high-quality literacy instruction that is successful with mainstream students but then go beyond this foundation to incorporate an ongoing and intensive focus on oral English development (August & Shanahan, 2006, 2010; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). In addition, strategies that are successful with mainstream students may need to be differentiated to take ELLs' varied levels of English proficiency into account (August & Shanahan, 2006, 2010; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Goldenberg, 2008; O'Day, 2009).

For secondary ELLs, high-quality literacy instruction must include an explicit focus on vocabulary and comprehension because adolescent ELLs are typically required to read longer and more complex texts. Adolescent literacy experts recommend that secondary students receive instruction that includes explicit vocabulary instruction, opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation, and direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction (Kamil et al., 2008). Research suggests that ELLs benefit when they receive intensive, explicit, high-quality in¬struction that embeds vocabulary words in a meaningful context, emphasizes "student-friendly definitions," builds on the student's first language knowledge, and provides students with multiple opportunities to review and practice these new words through structured activities that allow them to learn collaboratively through discussion with their peers. These interactive activities provide students with opportunities to improve their speaking skills, to practice new vocabulary in a meaningful context, and to promote comprehension by engaging them in a discussion of the academic content (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Genesee et al., 2006; Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Goldenberg, 2008; Short & Echevarria, 1999). Improving vocabulary and word analysis skills has the added benefit of helping ELLs improve their reading comprehension skills, an area in which many ELLs struggle (Carlo et al., 2004).

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Cultivate schoolwide high expectations for students.**
   - Align instruction with the New York State P–12 Common Core Learning Standards. According to NYCDOE (2011b), schools in New York City are set to have fully adopted the P–12 Common Core Learning Standards for students to take aligned assessments during the 2014–15 school year. These standards are internationally benchmarked and rigorous; they clearly explain what students at each grade level are expected to know and be able to do. Some schools were involved in pilot programs in 2010–11.
   - Develop a shared understanding of instructional rigor through collaborative curriculum planning, design, and/or redesign. When developing or revising curriculum maps, identify opportunities for formative assessment tasks that encourage higher-level thinking for each unit of study.
   - Ensure that ELLs receive high-quality literacy instruction that includes an explicit focus on improving reading comprehension, developing vocabulary and academic English, and providing students with multiple opportunities to build oral language proficiency in English. Through teacher collaboration, develop common student assignments that ask students to perform rigorous and authentic tasks.
   - Through teacher collaboration, develop common student assessments that include rigorous and authentic summative assessment tasks.
   - Monitor implementation of expectations through classroom observations, lesson plan review, and student achievement results on common formative assessments.

2. **Provide professional development for teachers on instructional strategies that push students to engage in higher-order thinking.**
   - Provide ongoing professional development for teachers that describes the importance of pushing students to do higher-level thinking and provides strategies for how to do so. This training may be provided through ongoing professional development sessions and/or support of an instructional coach.
   - Provide high-quality professional development for all teachers about second language acquisition, literacy development, sheltered instruction, the cultural diversity of ELLs, aligning instruction with language proficiency standards, using formative assessment data to guide instruction, and implementing research-based strategies that are appropriate for teaching reading, vocabulary, and academic English to ELLs. Create clear expectations regarding how teachers should implement this professional development in the classroom (e.g., one strategy utilized each day as reflected in lesson plans, authentic assessments at the end of each unit).
   - Identify how this professional development can be incorporated into scheduled teacher collaboration sessions.
   - Monitor implementation of professional development through classroom observations, lesson plan review, and student achievement results on common formative assessments.

3. **Develop examples of authentic intellectual work.**

   The following example can be used to help school leaders and teachers understand what authentic intellectual work might look like.

Examples of High-Scoring and Low-Scoring Measures of Authentic Intellectual Work

The research report *Improving Chicago's Schools: Authentic Intellectual Work and Standardized Tests: Conflict or Coexistence?* by Newmann, Bryk, and Nagaoka (2001) provides examples of two sixth-grade writing assignments: one that scored high and one that scored low on measures of authentic intellectual work. The authors conclude each example with a commentary of why the assignment received the score that it did.

High Scoring Writing Assignment

Write a paper persuading someone to do something. Pick any topic that you feel strongly about, convince the reader to agree with your belief, and convince the reader to take a specific action on this belief.

Commentary

In this high scoring assignment, demands for construction of knowledge are evident because students have to select information and organize it into convincing arguments. By asking students to convince others to believe and act in a certain way, the task entails strong demands that the students support their views with reasons or other evidence, which calls for elaborated written communication. Finally, the intellectual challenge is connected to students' lives because they are to write on something they consider to be personally important.

Low Scoring Writing Assignment

Identify the parts of speech of each underlined word below. All eight parts of speech—nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections—are included in this exercise.

1. My room is arranged for comfort and efficiency.
2. As you enter, you will find a wooden table on the left.
3. I write and type.
4. There is a book shelf near the table.
5. On this book shelf, I keep both my pencils and paper supplies.
6. I spend many hours in this room.
7. I often read or write there during the evening....

Commentary

This assignment requires no construction of knowledge or elaborated communication, and does not pose a question or problem clearly connected to students' lives. Instead it asks students to recall one-word responses, based on memorization or definitions of parts of speech.

Further examples of authentic intellectual instruction, teachers' assignments, and student work can be found in the following source:

Newmann, F. M., King, M. B., & Carmichael, D. L. (2007). *Authentic instruction and assessment: Common standards for rigor and relevance in teaching academic subjects.* Des Moines, IA: Iowa Department of Education. Retrieved June 22, 2011, from http://centerforaiw.com/sites/centerforaiw.com/files/Authentic-Instruction-Assessment-BlueBook.pdf

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Plainwell Middle School

Plainwell Middle School in Plainwell, Michigan, serves students in Grades 6–8. The school has had success in improving instructional rigor.

In 2005, Plainwell Community Schools implemented districtwide curriculum restructuring with professional development focused on using the research-based instructional strategies outlined in Robert Marzano's *Classroom Instruction that Works* (2003).... Some of the instructional delivery techniques that were adopted as part of this professional development include the use of nonlinguistic representations of abstract concepts and the use of higher-order questions to elicit student explanations. Teachers find Marzano's strategies to be compelling, noting the evidence of a significant correlation between increased student achievement and the use of research-proven instructional techniques. This approach lays the groundwork for a shift in staff culture, moving away from the use of personal intuition to the use of empirical, quantitative data to inform decisions around teaching and learning.

In 2005, social studies teachers at Plainwell Middle School decided to adopt a new curriculum aligned with Marzano's strategies.... Interactive slideshows are used as a way to actively engage students in new content learning, letting them participate in lectures by touching, interpreting, and acting out historical images and events projected onto a screen. The curriculum also supports vocabulary instruction with graphic organizers that connect definitions with visuals to help students understand and retain key terms. Some teachers...have modified the workbook graphic organizers to create their own "visual dictionaries."...

Higher-order questions are also used as an instructional technique through the new curriculum. Response groups are a structure that teachers use to facilitate small group discussion on controversial topics in history. Through a series of probing questions that require critical thinking and the use of evidence, teachers elicit student explanations that require analysis and application of historical information. Finally, students match up their decisions and viewpoints with actual decisions made in history.

In addition to these strategies, social studies teachers at Plainwell Middle School intentionally build review into daily lessons and assessments. Each day begins with a warm-up activity that quizzes students on a previous lesson.... When introducing a lesson, teachers also make sure to begin with a preview activity that they can refer back to when reviewing the material. ...

Curriculum restructuring at the middle school is carefully implemented to ensure success.... First, a less-is-more approach is taken, allowing ample time for teachers to learn and practice a single strategy before moving on to another one. Also, teacher training is conducted by lead teachers...who model classroom techniques, lead guided discussions, and set periodic objectives for teams. Instead of a passive "sit-and-get" approach, teachers actively practice the strategies and report to their teams about their progress. Finally, administrators support the efforts by aligning observational classroom walk-through forms to match the professional development focus, keeping the strategies at the center of conversation about teaching.

Description excerpted from the from the *Doing What Works* website at http://dww.ed.gov/media/CL/OIS/TopicLevel/case_plainwell_71508.pdf.
This information is in the public domain.

Recommendation 3: Professional Development

Develop and implement a professional development plan that is aligned to school goals, and focused on subject area content. Professional learning opportunities should be aligned to the following areas identified during the co-interpretation phase of the ESCA process: data use, instructional rigor, and/or implementing the positive behavioral management system.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Research has found that professional development for teachers is most effective and boosts student achievement when it is embedded in their daily work and sustained, as opposed to a one-time workshop model (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Steiner, 2004; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). Effective professional development also provides teachers with opportunities for collaboration, coaching, and peer observation, which allows them to be actively involved in their own development and more frequently practice learned skills (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Additionally, professional development is most effective when it is directly connected to teacher practice and focuses on content (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009; Yoon et al., 2007). Content areas should align with school improvement needs and goals to target improvement to those areas.

By refining the process by which professional development is offered; ensuring that it is embedded, sustained, and allows for active teacher participation; and focusing the development on teacher practice and content, schools can improve teacher practice and student achievement (Wei et. al., 2009; Yoon et al., 2007).

Meeting the Needs of ELLs. One critical component that high-quality programs for ELLs share is the quality of the teachers who serve ELLs. In the most effective programs for ELLs, teachers had strong content knowledge, were skilled in aligning curriculum and instruction, and demonstrated an ability to effectively address the needs of ELLs. Building the capacity of the staff involved strategically deploying ELL specialists where they were most needed and providing all teachers with high-quality job-embedded professional development that enabled them to implement research-based instructional practices that were effective with ELLs (Horowitz et al., 2009; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007; Parrish et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2007). Professional development that increases teachers' knowledge and skills and fosters improvements in teaching practice is intensive, sustained over time, encourages professional collaboration among teachers, and provides teachers with opportunities for active learning that can be applied in their own classroom (August & Shanahan, 2010; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

Teachers who serve ELLs should receive professional development in sheltered instruction, in high-quality literacy instruction, and in the effective use of native language support. In the sheltered English approach, lessons focus on both language and content objectives in order to meet the needs of ELL students, who must learn the grade-level content at the same time that they are improving their English proficiency. Teachers often begin a lesson by helping ELLs activate prior knowledge to facilitate the transfer of knowledge from their native language to English. In the most rigorous experimental study conducted to date,

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

High Quality Professional Development for All Teachers (Publication)
http://www.tqsource.org/publications/HighQualityProfessionalDevelopment.pdf

Professional Development for Educators (Website)
http://www.publicimpact.com/teachers-leaders/professional-development-for-educators

students who participated in a specific sheltered instruction model–Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) treatment group–outperformed, on average, students in the control group, but not to a statistically significant degree (Echevarria & Short, 2010). Other frequently used strategies include explicit vocabulary instruction, scaffolding instruction, and providing frequent opportunities for practice and application that involve interaction and the integration of language skills in all four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). When instruction in the content areas is delivered in English, because much of the vocabulary in the classroom will be unfamiliar to ELLs, teachers should provide context to help students understand the content that they are attempting to convey. In order to make the content more comprehensible, teachers can use a variety of scaffolding techniques: pre-teaching content vocabulary, including simplifying language; modifying texts; repeating key points; frequently checking for understanding; and using a number of visual supports, such as objects, pictures, video images, graphic organizers, tables, graphs, timelines, maps, pictures, gestures, and demonstrations.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Creating a professional development plan that addresses both student learning and teacher learning can be a complex task. Professional learning activities should be designed with student achievement as both the impetus and outcome. School improvement goals should be directly related to a review of student achievement data. Subsequently, teacher learning activities should be directly related to the goal of improving student outcomes. At minimum, successful schoolwide professional development plans include the following sequential steps:

1. **Analyze student data / conduct a needs assessment.**

   Review student learning data, such as an item analysis of state test results, interim assessment results, school quality review or ESCA report. Identify areas of low proficiency, slow learning progress, drops in proficiency between grades, and subgroup and gender differences.

2. **Select goals for student learning.**

   Identify specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-sensitive (SMART) learning goals for students.

3. **Select PD goals for teacher learning.**

   Identify specific and measurable teacher learning goals, directly related to student learning goals.

4. **Select PD activities to meet goals.**

   Determine what activities will best meet teachers learning needs (e.g., workshops, coaching, collaborative inquiry, inter-visitation, etc.) Consider available resources (time, money, materials) and a range of PD activities and match these resources with the needs of adult learners.

5. **Implement PD activities.**

   Ensure teachers have time and resources for activities (e.g., research, articles, video clips, coaches, opportunities to observe master teachers). Provide teachers with clear expectations for integration into their pedagogical practice, structures and protocols for activities, and opportunities for reflection.

6. **Evaluate impact.**

   Develop an evaluation plan. Identify what to measure, how to measure it, and when to measure it. Create a frequent and ongoing schedule of evaluation.

7. **Modify PD plan.**

   Determine the impact of the PD activity. If the activity achieves or fails to achieve its desired results, modify the plan accordingly.

   For practical applications, refer to the "Sample Professional Developement Plan."

Sample Professional Development Plan

Following is a sample professional development plan adapted from *Apply What You Know: Designing Effective Professional Development* (Steiner, 2009). It indicates the specific actions taken by the district, which show alignment to school goals and a focus on subject-area content.

Analysis of Data. Data analysis revealed a "significant drop in math proficiency between 4th and 5th grade." Further review of test item analysis indicated that students did not demonstrate proficiency in fractions.

Student Learning Goals. The district determined the following goal for students: "At the end of the third quarter of fifth grade, 75% of all students will pass an end-of-unit test on fractions."

Professional Development Goals for Teachers. The district determined the following goal for teachers: "At the end of the spring semester, all fifth grade teachers will demonstrate an improved ability to teach fractions as measured by their implementation of new instructional strategies and improved student learning."

Professional Development Activities. The district determined the following professional development activities to meet its goals: "In the fall, before teachers begin the fractions unit, 5th grade math teachers at each school will meet twice a month to discuss and share new curriculum materials related to fractions and design joint interim assessments to measure student progress. Teachers will have ongoing assistance of a math instructional coach. In the summer, [the district will] review schedules to make sure fifth grade teachers have common planning time to meet. [The district will] provide lead teachers and/or principals with curriculum materials and the assistance of an instructional coach to guide implementation."

Evaluating Impact: Measures of evaluation included "(1) percentage of students meeting objectives" as measured by "student test scores on end of unit assessment" and "(2) staff knowledge" and pedagogy, measured by regular and ongoing observations conducted by the school's instructional leaders.

Designing a Long-Term Professional Development Plan

When designing and implementing long-term professional development plans, professional learning activities and goals should be rolled out throughout the school year. Following is a sample professional development plan for Paradise Valley Middle School. Based on a needs assessment conducted by the school, the percentage of black students who met or exceeded proficiency in math was as much as 20 percent lower than the percentage of white students who met or exceeded proficiency in math. In reading, that percentage was as much as 30 percent lower.

PARADISE VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Goal 1: Close the achievement gap between black and white students in reading and mathematics.

Objectives: Sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students' achievement gap in reading and mathematics will be reduced by 5% as measured by district formative assessments.

Teacher Objective: All teachers will be able to plan and implement research-based instruction in their content area as measured by principal and school improvement team classroom walk-throughs conducted in the spring.

Objective 1: All teachers will plan research-based instruction in their content areas.

Strategies/Actions	Person Responsible	Measurement of Accomplishment	Resources Needed	Due Date
Daily interdisciplinary team meetings devote at least two days a week to jointly planning research-based instruction lesson plans or units.	Team leader creates agendas to include significant time for this work.	Each team generates and submits at least four lessons or one unit each grading period.	Leveled reading materials, project-based materials, access to computer lab	Dec and June
Content-area teachers meet twice a week to study TIMSS, analyze test data to determine which mathematics objectives had not been met by a majority of students.	Team leader creates agendas and requests materials from district staff development or curriculum department.	Presentation about TIMSS and research-based instruction to other teachers during professional development time. Analysis of student learning results and lists of difficult objectives.	Disaggregated mathematics scores by objective TIMSS book and study TIMSS videotapes	January: Analysis of tests April for presentation

Objective 2: All teachers will implement research-based lessons in their classrooms.

Strategies/Actions	Person Responsible	Measurement of Accomplishment	Resources Needed	Due Date
Each team sets an implementation timeline.	Team Individual Teacher	Team members submit written debriefing of lessons. Classroom walk-through data and analysis	Debriefing protocols	

Excerpted from Ozarks Unlimited Resources Educational Services Cooperative. (2008). Effective professional development. In *A toolkit for quality professional development in Arkansas* (pp. 103–185). Harrison, AR: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2011, from http://www.oursc.k12.ar.us/default_images/index/pd_toolkit/pdtoolkitchapter3.pdf

Recommendation 4: Schoolwide Behavior Management System

Develop and implement a schoolwide positive behavior policy and system with clearly established standards for safety, discipline, and respect. The policy and related system should include concise social expectations and a continuum of supports, interventions, incentives/rewards, and consequences—including a clear delineation of activities and programs that students are entitled to versus those that are privileges.

LINK TO RESEARCH

One of the greatest obstacles within urban schools is the large number of students whose behavior interferes with their achievement or the achievement of others. Often these students have behaved in a manner that disrupts the educational climate of the classroom and the school. One key element for changing this pattern is the implementation of a schoolwide behavior program that is developed with the input and support of parents and staff.

Effective schoolwide behavior programs have clearly established standards for safety, discipline, and respect. Students need a secure, orderly environment that promotes their personal well-being and supports learning. Rules should also be fair and stress the students' responsibility to the school community, their parents, and themselves. All students in the school need to be aware of the rules, the reasons for the rules, and the consequences for breaking the rules. Effective discipline programs are based on praise and encouragement for positive behavior and clear, consistent consequences for misbehavior (Chicago Public Schools, Office of Specialized Services, 1998).

Effective schools build and maintain a positive "social culture." Successful students are safe (don't hurt themselves or others), respectful (follow adult requests and get along with their peers), and responsible (arrive to class on time and complete assignments). These foundational skills are essential for a safe and orderly school environment. In addition, members of a positive social culture use "higher order" skills, such as (a) impulse control, (b) anger management, (c) conflict resolution, (d) empathy, and (e) drug and alcohol use resistance and prevention. Research studies consistently show that schools that establish a positive social culture also achieve the best academic gains (CalSTAT, 2011).

Positive behavior interventions, used correctly by teachers, administrators, and parents, encourage or strengthen desirable behavior and reduce inappropriate behavior. Positive interventions have a greater likelihood of enabling a student to change his/her behavior in a way that does not interrupt learning. Effective interventions encourage praise and recognition of positive behavior and demand clear and consistent responses to misbehavior. Children and youth tend to respond to positive techniques. In some cases, however, more restrictive interventions may be necessary to control and change extremely inappropriate and aggressive behavior (Chicago Public Schools, Office of Specialized Services, 1998).

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is based on the lessons learned from more than 7,000 schools currently implementing successful changes in their school environment. SWPBIS evolved from valid research in the field of special education. SWPBS is not a curriculum, intervention, or practice but a decision-making framework that guides selection,

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Alcott Middle School Behavior Expectations and Related Teaching Materials (Website)
http://www.pbis.org/swpbs_videos/alcott_mid.aspx

"Discovering School-Wide PBS: Moving Towards a Positive Future" from Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project (Video)
http://www.pbis.org/swpbs_videos/pbs_video-discovering_swpbs.aspx

Washington Elementary School Example (Video)
http://www.pbis.org/swpbs_videos/wash._elem.aspx

integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based behavioral practices for improving important academic outcomes for all students (Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, 2011b).

Researchers have only recently begun to study the effects of schoolwide behavior management systems and what it takes to implement these systems effectively. While it is too early to offer "recipes for success," the work of key researchers and their school-based colleagues is providing some encouraging developments. While there are different schoolwide systems of behavioral support, most have certain features in common. The emphasis is on consistency—both throughout the building and across classrooms. The entire school staff is expected to adopt strategies that will be uniformly implemented. As a result, approaches necessitate professional development and long-term commitment by the school leadership for this innovation to take hold. The school-based models featured in the Quick Links (see previous page) have been selected to show how different features of a schoolwide behavior management system can be implemented in urban, suburban, and rural locations. These schools understand that change is incremental, and are approaching implementation of their schoolwide systems slowly and over an extended period.

Common Features of Schoolwide Behavioral Management Systems

- Total staff commitment to managing behavior, whatever approach is taken
- Clearly defined and communicated expectations and rules
- Consequences and clearly stated procedures for correcting rule-breaking behaviors
- An instructional component for teaching students self-control and/or social skill strategies

(The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1997)

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Incorporate key guiding principles of student behavior management.**

   The Office of Special Education Program's Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2011b) has established the following SWPBS guiding principles:

   - Develop a continuum of scientifically based behavior and academic interventions and supports.
     - A well-articulated schoolwide behavior policy/student code that includes positive expectations, minor and major infractions, etc. must first be in place. Clarity around expectations for staff's handling of in-class behaviors is important here. Authentic faculty feedback and participation are important throughout the policy and system-development processes.
   - Use data to make decisions and solve problems.
     - Data on both minor and major behavior incidents should be collected, tracked, analyzed, and utilized in decision making by the team and faculty at least on a monthly basis. Data should be presented in a user-friendly format.

- Arrange the environment to prevent the development and occurrence of problem behavior.
  - This includes three to five positively stated overarching schoolwide social expectations around the schools, particularly in problematic areas.
- Teach and encourage prosocial skills and behaviors.
  - Students should be introduced to/taught the schoolwide expectations, rules for specific settings, reward/consequence system, and related interventions/supports. Staff should be trained on how to present expectations to students. Ongoing communication and collaboration with families and the community are very important.
- Implement evidenced-based behavioral practices with fidelity and accountability.
  - Interventions should be multitiered, increasing in levels of intensity, and inclusive of evidence-based programs or strategies. The primary level (all students) is the overall behavior management plan. The secondary level (some students) is for a targeted group or focused on individual plans for those who did not respond to the first level. The tertiary level (few students) includes highly individualized plans for students who did not respond to the first two levels.
- Screen universally and monitor student performance and progress continuously.
  - There should be a plan for collecting data to evaluate SWPBS outcomes, wherein data are collected as scheduled, and used to evaluate effectiveness for future adjustments.

2. **Build a team.**

   Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project (2005) outlines a SWPBS process that provides a systematic structure and formalized procedures that can be implemented during the summer. The initial steps are to establish and get all staff to buy in. Establishing a schoolwide leadership team or behavior support team supports this goal. If possible, fold SWPBS into the roles and responsibilities of an already established team, rather than developing yet another group. Members of the team should include administrators (i.e., principal, assistant principal or dean), counselors, social workers, regular education teachers, special education teachers, members with behavior expertise, and a coach/district representative. It is vital that the administration supports the process, takes an active role, and attends most meetings.

3. **Determine school capacity.**

   It is important to assess and develop the school's capacity to implement a comprehensive program. Key questions include:

   - What are the schoolwide social expectations, routines, etc.?
   - Who at the school has the unique disposition necessary to both firmly hold students accountable and support them as they attempt to adjust with fidelity?
     - What are the procedural expectations of teachers for managing in-class behaviors?
     - What manageable recourse do teachers have for extremely disruptive or disrespectful instances of behavior "in the moment" (e.g., immediate referrals to a dean/counselor/administration, in-school "timeout room," criteria for reentry)?

- What is the specific, realistic, and manageable continuum of interventions and supports?
- What is the specific, realistic, and manageable continuum of consequences for patterns of disruptive in-class behavior?
- How will the efficacy of chosen interventions and supports be monitored and adjusted as needed in a data-driven manner? Who is responsible for this?
- What are the mechanisms for notifying and collaborating with students' parents/guardians in the process early and often? Who is responsible for this (i.e., teachers, counselors, social workers, deans, administrators)?
- What are the thresholds for more severe consequences/privilege losses for patterns or disruptive behaviors?
- What outside resources are available to support students and families struggling with issues that are affecting students' behavior, but well outside of the school's capacity to address?
- What privileges and incentives (e.g., extracurriculars, athletics, field trips, social activities) are currently in place that can serve as points of leverage? Do more need to be identified or developed?
- How are students who actively exhibit established desirable social behaviors formally recognized? Perhaps most importantly, how are students who are actively attempting to make sustained social adjustments formally recognized and supported (without stigmatizing)?

Positive Behavior Support in the Classroom

- Arrange classroom to minimize crowding and distraction.
- Provide explicit classroom routines and directions that are linked to schoolwide routines and directions.
- Post three to five positively stated expectations. Teach and reinforce them.
- Provide frequent acknowledgement of appropriate behaviors.
- Give students multiple opportunities to respond and participate during instruction.
- Actively supervises classes during instruction.
- Ignore or provide quick, direct, explicit reprimands/redirections in response to inappropriate behavior.
- Incorporate multiple strategies to acknowledge appropriate behavior (points, praise) linked to schoolwide strategies.
- Provide specific feedback in response to social and academic errors, and correct responses.

Source: *Classroom Management: Self-Assessment Revised,* by Brandi Simonsen, Sarah Fairbanks, Amy Briesch, and George Sugai, available online at http://www.pbis.org/pbis_resource_detail_page.aspx?Type=4&PBIS_ResourceID=174. This document was published in 2006 by the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at the University of Connecticut.

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Jonesboro Middle School

Jonesboro Middle School (JMS), in the center of Clayton County, Georgia, has a population of 558 students and a 65 percent poverty rate. JMS is a model demonstration school for the state of Georgia's Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support efforts.

In 2003, JMS was one of several middle schools in Clayton County that received a stipend to send a team of staff members to a three-day training on a schoolwide PBIS effort that Georgia calls Effective Behavioral and Instructional Supports (EBIS). The team that JMS sent included the assistant principal in charge of data and discipline, representative core teachers from each grade level, representative special education teachers, representative staff members, and a parent representative. The JMS team learned how to develop capacity by successfully implementing the following characteristics of EBIS:

- Using data-based decision making
- Developing a simple set of behavioral expectations
- Teaching behavioral expectations
- Acknowledging appropriate behavior

Like hundreds of schools across the United States and Canada, JMS has found that implementing PBIS can have many benefits. The JMS team developed three simple rules, or behavioral expectations, for their school. Once the rules were developed, the team took the expectations to the entire staff for approval. The staff settled on the following set of behavioral expectations:

1. Be respectful of self, others, and property.
2. Be responsible and prepared at all times.
3. Be ready to follow directions and procedures.

To acknowledge the good behavior of students, the team decided on a "gotcha" system that would be brought to the office to be traded for a small prize, such as ice cream at lunch. They introduced the gotchas to the teachers and instructed them on how to use them. They made sure that the entire staff understood that these were not to be given out to every child in their class; rather, the staff was to monitor the nonclassroom areas looking for good examples of "Doing it the Jonesboro Way" and giving a gotcha for a specific exemplar. This is why unsuspecting students who picked up trash on the school grounds were surprised by the assistant principal jumping out from around a tree to give them a gotcha for picking up litter and respecting property. Students in the cafeteria were quick to assist someone who drops a tray because they never know when someone would be watching to give them a gotcha for respecting their neighbor.

Prior to implementing EBIS, JMS dealt with 1,252 office discipline referrals (ODR) per year. In the first year of EBIS implementation, they only dealt with 674 ODR. Assuming the average ODR takes approximately 15 minutes, this is a savings of 8,670 minutes. This is equivalent to 145 hours, or almost 21 days. That is a month more of contact time that the staff had to spend instructing and interacting positively with their students.

Reprinted from *Jonesboro Middle School Case,* Office of Special Education Programs, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2011a), available online at http://www.pbis.org/school/primary_level/jonesboro.aspx. This document is in the public domain.

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