M.S. 302 Luisa Dessus Cruz

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 M.S. 302 Luisa Dessus Cruz 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 restructuring 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 M.S. 302 Luisa Dessus Cruz

M.S. 302 Luisa Dessus Cruz (X302) is a middle school located in Community School District 8 in the Bronx. The school serves approximately 780 students from Grades 6 through 8. M.S. 302 is co-located in a building along with Girls Prep Charter School, each with its own floor(s) and sharing common spaces, i.e., the auditorium, library, gymnasium, and cafeteria. According to the Comprehensive Educational Plan, just under one third of the school's population (approximately 300 students annually) consists of transient students. The continual change in the student population is a fact that M.S. 302 acknowledges creates unique challenges for the administration and faculty. The school is organized into three themed vertical academies whose composition consists of small schools where students, teachers, and parents can build trusting relationships. It is the goal of M.S. 302 to ensure that all students receive a solid foundation in all of the core subject areas, including social studies and science.

In 2009–10, M.S. 302 did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in English language arts (ELA) for all students, the Hispanic or Latino subgroup, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged students. In 2010–11, M.S. 302's state accountability status was designated as "Restructuring (Year 1)."[1] Because M.S. 302 was designated as in restructuring, the school participated in the ESCA.

The ESCA process will help M.S. 302 implement a restructuring plan that is inclusive of four focus areas that will positively impact the school learning community and help school staff focus on issues that will move them toward exiting restructuring status. Most schools are already overwhelmed with change and do not need new initiatives. M.S. 302 will benefit from an approach that consolidates existing initiatives and makes it easier for people within the school community to work together toward common ends.

[1] https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2010/aa/AOR-2010-320800010302.pdf. Accessed on March 3, 2011

Audit Process at M.S. 302 Luisa Dessus Cruz

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 M.S. 302, during the month of March 2011. From these data, Learning Point Associates prepared a series of reports for the school's use.

These reports were presented to the school at a co-interpretation[SM] meeting on June 8, 2011. During this meeting, 16 stakeholders from the M.S. 302 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 M.S. 302.

The Appendix provides a school improvement planning calendar inclusive of all four recommendations provided in this report.

Key Findings

After considerable thought and discussion, co-interpretation participants determined a set of key findings. The wording of the key findings below 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:

Observations and teacher surveys indicate a lack of highly engaging learning activities in some classrooms. Lacking activities included being linked to the real world, making presentations, extended investigations and projects, using models and simulations, and discussions.

Critical Key Finding 1 is supported by information from teacher survey results and classroom observations. Teachers reported infrequent opportunities for students to engage in giving formal presentations, working on models or simulations, or extended investigations or projects. Classroom observations noted a lack of focus on broadening student understanding, not linking content to real-world situations, and not connecting content to students' prior knowledge. Auditors also observed limited opportunity for student choice and responsibility, or connections between lessons and current life.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 2:

Professional development focused on teaching students with disabilities and those who are English language learners (ELLs) is not consistently helpful.

Critical Key Finding 2 is supported by teacher survey results. Approximately half of teachers surveyed found professional development on teaching students with disabilities and English language learners to be moderately, minimally, or not helpful. Teacher survey results further showed that teachers have inconsistent expectations for providing instruction to students with disabilities or students for whom English is a second language. When planning instruction, 20 percent of teachers never or almost never reference individualized education programs (IEPs). Almost half (48 percent) of teachers surveyed reported using the same ELA/math standards when teaching ELLs, while 44 percent report using modified versions.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 3:

During instructional time in the classroom, there is an inconsistency between students and teachers with feedback loops, opportunities for higher-order thinking and content understanding.

Critical Key Finding 3 is supported by teacher survey results and classroom observations. In 79 percent of observed classrooms, the focus was primarily on students providing the right answers and not on a deep and thorough exploration of key concepts or procedures. Classroom observations also revealed an emphasis on remembering and recalling facts, with minimal or no focus on ensuring that students understand different perspectives on the topic. There was limited evidence of opportunities for students to engage in analysis and problem

solving in nearly all observed classrooms (90 percent). In these classrooms, there were infrequent opportunities for students to use inferencing, critical thinking, or analysis. Students were sometimes asked to go beyond providing correct answers with prompting questions like, “Did the explanation of the concept help? How so?” However, the demands on students did not consistently emphasize higher-order thinking, problem solving, and meta-cognition. Feedback loops were not used consistently or effectively and were often short or did not encourage the expansion of student understanding. Teachers typically did not positively affirm or encourage students and, if so, did it in a perfunctory way. Overall, observations note a lack of enthusiasm and enjoyment in the interaction among the teacher and students. The teacher remained physically distant from the students, suggesting little signs of a relationship between teacher and students.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 4:
Schoolwide behavior modification programs are not consistent throughout the school to offset classroom behavior issues.

Critical Key Finding 4 is supported by information from teacher survey results, classroom observations, and a review of documents submitted by the school. Documents provided evidence that the school collects anecdotal information on students, which includes teacher and staff observations, behavior records and disciplinary actions, and telephone logs with student and parents. A review of submitted documents also shows parent/student handbooks contain several pieces of student behavior policy. However, teacher survey results suggested behavior management is not implemented consistently in all classrooms across the school. Although 88 percent of teachers surveyed agree that M.S. 302 has a schoolwide behavior plan in place, only 69 percent of teachers responded that the behavior management strategies used in their own classroom is consistent with those used throughout the school. Evidence of this inconsistent implementation showed in classroom observations, where there was a lack of engagement and a presence of disrupters from within and outside of the classroom.

Recommendations

Overview of Recommendations

The ESCA process can help M.S. 302 gain a clear picture of current conditions in the school beyond AYP status and provide four focused areas that will positively impact the school learning community. These research-based recommendations provide M.S. 302 with a foundation from which to build and move the school out of Restructuring (Year 1) status.

Participants at the co-interpretation identified and prioritized four issues to focus on for improvement: student engagement; collaboration between teachers of ELLs, students with disabilities, and content area teachers; instructional rigor with quality feedback; and a schoolwide behavior management system. These priorities were supported by evidence from data collected by Learning Point Associates auditors and presented to the participants during the co-interpretation.

THE FOUR RECOMMENDATIONS

With these issues in mind and using relevant research, Learning Point Associates has developed the following four recommendations for M.S. 302:

1. Initiate a schoolwide process for increasing student engagement and creating a sustainable and supportive learning environment within each smaller learning community.
2. Support collaboration among all teachers, including general education teachers and special education teachers, through common planning time and shared professional development. This will foster a partnership whereby all teachers work together to enable all students to master grade-level objectives.
3. Implement instructional strategies that increase opportunities for higher-order thinking, analysis and problem solving, and deeper content understanding and that encourage high-quality instructional feedback between the teacher and students or among students.
4. Develop and implement a common set of positive behavior expectations and a system for acknowledging and supporting appropriate behavior across the smaller learning communities.

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

The order in which these recommendations are presented does not reflect a ranking or prioritization among them.

Recommendation 1: Student Engagement

Initiate a schoolwide process for increasing student engagement and creating a sustainable and supportive learning environment within each smaller learning community. The aim is to improve student attendance, enhance participation, reduce boredom, end negative behaviors and the associated classroom management issues, and increase student achievement in academic and social skills.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Student engagement provides an essential foundation for increasing achievement levels. "Educators must work to build engagement levels if they hope to support students in meeting higher standards" (Learning Point Associates, 2005, p. 2).

Literature about middle school reform acknowledges the importance of an academically challenging and supportive environment to engage young adolescent learners. Student motivation, a meaningful curriculum, and student choice also are important factors for engaging middle-level learners (Caskey & Anfara, 2007; Learning Point Associates, 2005; Newmann, Marks, & Gamoran, 1995).

In a report on the 2009 High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE), which was taken by 42,754 students, Yazzie-Mintz (2010, pp. 2–3) describes a spectrum of student disengagement—from temporary boredom to dropping out—and attributes this disengagement to the following: uninteresting and irrelevant material, work being too challenging or not challenging enough, no interaction with the teacher, not liking the school or the teacher, not seeing value in the assigned work, adults at the school not caring about the student, safety and bullying concerns, schoolwork not connecting to real world or real work, feeling little connection with any adult at the school, teacher favoritism, ineffective instruction or instructional methods, feeling unheard and not responded to or respected, and feelings of frustration and disconnection.

When students feel marginalized or alienated at school, they lose interest and become disengaged. Yazzie-Mintz (2010, p. 17) concludes that there are considerable gaps not only in academic achievement but also in student engagement and suggests the integration of engagement data with academic data as a useful tool for school planning and decision making.

Factors that would increase student engagement, according to the surveyed students (Yazzie-Mintz, pp. 18–23) are as follows: supportive and nurturing schools; increased individualization; classes that are more fun as well as interactive, experiential, and relevant; a schoolwide belief in relationships, respect, and responsibility; coaching and modeling for the staff of good student engagement practices; reflection on and response to student ideas; adult understanding of student skills, strengths, and interests and having these qualities inform instruction; experiential learning and interdisciplinary studies; and opportunities for students to work together on finding solutions to real-world problems and issues.

Students need to build a sense of self-efficacy (Alvermann, 2003) in an inclusive environment in which they can achieve competence. They should be engaged in authentic and personally meaningful work, using a culturally relevant curriculum with an appropriate level of difficulty and challenge—one that requires problem solving (Voke, 2002). In addition, Gordon (2006)

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Center for Mental Health in Schools (Website)
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (Website)
http://www.casel.org

Illinois Learning Standards for Social/Emotional Learning (Website)
http://isbe.state.il.us/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility (Website)
http://www.morningsidecenter.org

suggests the recognition and leveraging of individual student strengths and recalls a typical student response from the 2005 Gallup Youth Survey (pp. 77–80):

> "My teacher understood the way that I learned and worked. I was never criticized for my ideas or feelings, but I was met with questions and ideas that could change the way I looked at something." —Jessica, 17, Waverly, IA (p. 77)

A rubric titled the "Partnership Guide for Culturally Responsive Teaching" (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000, pp. 185–187) offers a list of engagement activities (establishing inclusion, developing a positive attitude, enhancing meaning and engendering competence) and assessment tools. The Executive Summary of *Engaging Schools* (National Academy of Sciences, 2003) provides 10 recommendations for reaching "the goals of meaningful engagement and genuine improvements in achievement" for high school students (pp. 4–9). Easton (2008) discusses engaging struggling high school students by using experiential learning, essential questions and a whole-child perspective in curriculum development, instructional strategies, professional development, and teacher evaluations. "If there is a secret to motivation in the classroom," says Gordon (2006, p. 80), "it lies in the interaction between the teacher and the student."

"There is a growing consensus that whatever else is done, schools must also become places where it is easier for students and teachers to know one another well and for students to connect to the school and its purposes, says Sergiovanni (2000, p. 58). "Schools in other words must be caring and learning communities."

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS: WHOLE-SCHOOL PRACTICES

Incorporating student engagement practices should be part of the annual school improvement process. Whole-school practices such as building a safe and supportive school environment are part of this process. Students can learn effectively only in environments in which they feel safe and supported and where their teachers have high expectations for their learning. Implementation of a schoolwide positive behavior plan that is based on pro-social values, social competencies, incentives, and positive peer relationships will lay the foundation for classroom-level work and must occur before the classroom work can begin.

The following guidelines were developed by the Victoria Department of Education and Early Child Development (2009) for implementation of effective student engagement strategies across whole schools at the building level:

1. **Create a positive school culture.**

   Teachers and staff must recognize students as individuals by acknowledging and celebrating the diversity of the student population. The school must find ways to connect students to school (through clubs, sports, student council, and other activities) so they develop a sense of belonging. The school should provide transition programs and practices at different stages of schooling that will minimize anxiety, increase resilience, and ensure that students develop a readiness to enter their new environment and make successful transitions between year levels.

2. **Encourage student participation.**

   Giving students a voice is not simply about the opportunity to communicate ideas and opinions; it also is about having the power to influence change. Incorporating meaningful involvement of students means validating and authorizing them to represent their own ideas, opinions, knowledge, and experiences throughout education to improve the school.

3. **Proactively engage with parents/caretakers.**

   Keys to successful partnerships with parents/caretakers and families include strong two-way communication, volunteer opportunities, curricula-related collaborations, shared decision making, community-based partnerships, and efficacy building.

4. **Implement preventative and early interventions.**

   The school needs to determine how it will intervene when students exhibit disengaged behaviors—specifically poor attendance and anti-social behaviors. Prevention strategies should target the whole school and should be designed to reduce any risk factors that may contribute to attendance or behavioral issues.

5. **Respond to individual students.**

   The school should have a process in place to identify and respond to individual students who require additional assistance and support. It is imperative to coordinate early intervention and prevention strategies that utilize internal as well as external support services in order to identify and address the barriers to learning that individual students may be facing.

Schools also can implement major changes to their structures that can make it easier to develop positive learning relationships, including small learning communities, alternative scheduling, team teaching, teaching continuity, school-based enterprises, and professional learning communities.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS: CLASSROOM PRACTICES

Keeping middle school students focused and engaged in the classroom is quite a challenge amid the entire complex changes—physical, intellectual, emotional, and social—that they experience during this phase of their lives. Youth ages 11 to 13 years (a period sometimes called the "tween" years) are characterized by a growing desire to think and act independently while at the same time caring deeply about being accepted by peers and being part of a group (Caskey & Anfara, 2007).

1. **Relate lessons to students' lives.**

   A relevant curriculum relates content to the daily lives, concerns, experiences, and pertinent social issues of the learners. Teachers can gain insight into student concerns by taking periodic interest inventories, through informal conversations, and from classroom dialogue (Learning Point Associates, 2005). These issues and topics then can be incorporated into units, lesson plans, and further classroom discussions.

2. **Make the learning authentic.**

   Newmann et al. (1995) advocate for authentic instructional practices to engage learners and offer three criteria for authentic instructional practices: construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and value beyond the school.

   The first criterion for authentic instructional practices is to facilitate the construction of knowledge by acknowledging students' existing understanding and experience. Identifying students' preconceptions and initial understanding is critical to the learning process. "If students' preconceptions are not addressed directly, they often memorize content (e.g., formulas in physics), yet still use their experience-based preconceptions to act in the world" (Donovan & Bransford, 2005, p. 5).

   The second criterion for authentic instructional practices is to facilitate disciplined inquiry through structured activities; the inquiry process is critical to the construction of knowledge (Marzano, 2003; Newmann et al., 1995). This process consists of building on the learner's prior knowledge to develop a deeper understanding, integrating new information, and using the knowledge in new ways.

   The third criterion for authentic instructional practices is value beyond school (Newmann et al., 1995). This criterion may entail connecting content to personal or public issues as well as the demonstration of understanding to an audience beyond the school. Examples of such activities include writing persuasive letters to the city council to advocate for a skate park, interviewing community elders for an oral history project, or communicating the impact of a development project using scientific concepts.

3. **Give students choices.**

   Finally, providing choice in middle-level classrooms will engage learners. Providing opportunities for students to select a topic or text acknowledges young adolescents' need to exercise more decision-making power. Giving students ownership in their learning process increases motivation and keeps interest levels high. Students who have a strong interest in a specific subject may wish to pursue an independent project. These projects may be used as a differentiated way to explore the curriculum. (See "Regard for Adolescent Perspectives in the Classroom" on the following page.)

Regard for Adolescent Perspectives in the Classroom

Following are some suggestions for showing regard for adolescent perspectives. These ideas are based on the work of Smutny, Walker, and Meckstroth (1997) and Tomlinson (1999).

- Independent projects will extend learning beyond the curriculum in the textbook and develop enthusiasm, commitment, and academic skills in addition to allowing students to develop deeper relationships with subject matter.
- "Brainstorming with…children on what kinds of projects they could do may also generate ideas teachers may never have thought of on their own" (Smutny, 2000, p. 7).
- Surveying students' interests in the beginning of the school year will give teachers direction in planning activities that will 'get students on board' from the start.
- Surveying again at key points during the year will inform teachers of new interests that develop as their students grow.
- Interest centers are designed to motivate students' exploration of topics in which they have a particular interest. They are usually comprised of objects that students can explore, such as shells, leaves, maps, or projects, and are centered around broad topics. Students can choose from the menu and note their choices accordingly. Teachers decide how many items on the menu (minimum) that each student is required to complete. This is adjusted to meet instructional needs on an individual basis.

Examples of Student Engagement

The National Center for School Engagement (2007) compiled the following examples of student engagement best practices from school districts across the United States:

Factor in Math Fun: *In Oswego, New York, a Factoring Fan Club was created for 9th grade math students to get them excited about factoring, to keep it fresh in their minds, and to be "good" at factoring.* Source: Oswego School District, Oswego, NY

Celebrate Pi Day on 3/14: *This event was created to help students enjoy math by offering a fun-filled day honoring pi. Events included a pie eating contest, measuring the diameter and circumference of round objects to calculate pi, and other games related to circles.* Source: Independence School District, Independence, VA

Mobilize Community: *Community Now! is an asset-based community development tool of the Connection Institute. It uses asset-based language and planning to bring the community together to discover what values the community shares as a whole. It then works to mobilize community members around its assets and shares values to become proactive in its planning rather than reactive.* Source: Kittery Children's Leadership Council, Kittery, ME

Collaborate with Higher Education: *In Mesquite, Texas, a local college delivers 3.5 hours of continuing education courses ("Educational Opportunities") to truant students and their families. The curriculum includes the negative consequences associated with poor school attendance and the positive consequences associated with scholastic achievement. Discussion of transition from high school to college is discussed and a tour of the college is provided*. Source: Dallas Independent School District, TX

Offer Incentives: *As a reward, a lunch-time soccer game is organized for students with good attendance by school staff.* Source: Summit School District, Frisco, CO

Support Positive Behavior: *Jacksonville School District adapted the principles of* Got Fish? *(a book to build business morale) for the classroom. Principles include: being there, play, choosing your behavior, and make their day. Students are recognized when observed "living" each of the principles*. Source: Jacksonville School District, Jacksonville, FL

Create Student-Generated Classroom Rules: *In Eugene, Oregon, students create a list of classroom rules to be followed. Each student signs off on the rules and is held accountable by fellow students. In addition, they developed their own "honor roll", in which students are recognized for doing their best, following directions, and not talking out more than 3 times a day*. Source: Linn Benton Lincoln Education Service District, Eugene, OR

Facilitate Positive Student-Teacher Connections: *Some schools in Oregon encourage students to sign up for a one-on-one lunch with their teacher during school time. The teacher uses this time to get to know the student and offers them encouragement and praise. Children and youth benefit when their teachers demonstrate that they care about student well-being in addition to academic success*. Source: Linn Benton Lincoln Education Service District, Eugene, OR

Recommendation 2: Teacher Collaboration

Support collaboration among all teachers, including general education teachers and special education teachers through common planning time and shared professional development. This will foster a partnership whereby all teachers work together to enable all students to master grade-level objectives.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Many general education teachers have not received staff development in how to instruct students with a variety of learning styles and needs, nor are they typically aware of how to choose "scientifically validated curricula and academic programs that address at-risk students' needs" (Fuchs et al., 2007, p. 58). However, special educators and other specialized instructors have more specific training on working with diverse learners and selecting valid instructional programs with integrity. Herein lies the need for collaboration.

Teacher collaboration is a type of job-embedded professional development. Collaboration among teachers and other school professionals may be defined as the manner in which, and extent to which, members of the school interact in their approach to their work, and is characterized by authentic interactions that are professional in nature (Marzano, 2003). These behaviors may include but are not necessarily limited to openly sharing failures and mistakes, demonstrating respect for one another, and constructively analyzing and criticizing practices and procedures in an effort to improve teaching and learning in a school (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Marzano cites the need for a number of school norms that will enable teachers and other staff to effectively work to improve their schools, norms such as deciding how staff will resolve conflicts, how staff will address and solve professional problems, how staff will communicate to third parties about other staff members, and how staff will behave during professional meetings (e.g., staff meetings and professional development). Lambert (2003) identifies teachers who have a high degree of skill in this area as possessing a shared vision resulting in program coherence; inquiry-based use of data to inform decisions and practice; broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility reflected in roles and actions; reflective practice that leads consistently to innovation; and high or steadily improving student achievement.

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

The Access Center (Website)
http://www.k8accesscenter.org

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The overarching goal of this recommendation is to provide a rationale and suggested action steps for increased collaboration among general education and special education teachers and to ensure that information pertinent to English language learners and students with disabilities is shared amongst all staff at M.S. 302. There is a need to find times for teachers to meet, plan instruction, and discuss specific students and their needs.

Special education teachers can collaborate with their colleagues by assisting general educators in their planning for instruction (Murawski & Dieker, 2004). Planning for a class collaboratively allows special educators to have input in the lesson proactively, even if they might not be there physically (Murawski, 2005). This enables special educators to coach their general education counterparts on instructional strategies that can be used with a variety of students to enable them to access the general education curriculum effectively.

Effective opportunities for collaboration are developed and implemented using the following structures and steps:

1. **Offer formal and regularly scheduled opportunities for collaboration around specific areas of need related to students with disabilities.**
   - Shared planning time during the school day that will enable content-area teachers to share information with special education teachers about content to be covered and to share ideas that will benefit all students
   - A system of easy communication among staff, so that teachers can note any concerns or issues related to specific students
   - Creation of a joint general education/special education team that plans together regularly to ensure coverage across content areas and pacing that benefits all students
   - Create feedback loops whereby teachers have the opportunity to voice at regular intervals what is working and not working for them in terms of formal collaborative opportunities, and also to provide feedback on the other types of professional development they are learning that they may need as they continue to work together and learn from one another.
   - Train staff on effective communication and collaboration skills (e.g., active listening, establishing appropriate agendas, effective use of meeting time). Use reflective questions or protocols to guide collaborative discussions and ensure optimal use of collaborative meetings.
   - Offer the sessions during times when general education and special education teachers are available to participate.
   - Ensure that sessions are interactive and allow teachers opportunities to learn from one another.
   - Provide opportunities for teachers to give feedback on the sessions so that adjustments can be made to better address the needs of students.
   - Have an administrator participate to show the school's support for collaboration.
2. **Align teacher work with school goals and priorities.**
   - Teamwork should mirror and seek to enhance schoolwide student achievement goals and objectives. Agendas, activities, and outcomes are reflective of schoolwide priorities.
   - Once collaboration time is identified and embedded into the school's instructional calendar, create a plan to address school improvement topics during collaboration time. Consider in which order school improvement needs and topics will be addressed.
3. **Ensure that collaboration is data driven.**
   - Conduct a data-driven needs assessment to determine topics for collaborative sessions (e.g., progress of students, differentiated instructional approaches, team teaching strategies). Be sure to include teacher input through informal surveys or opportunities to vote on needed topics.

- Use student performance data in collaborative groups. This will be the focus with which to improve teaching and learning. Data can help identify areas of concern and aid the development of strategies and solutions.
- Create a schedule in which data analysis is embedded in collaborative time. The use of protocols can provide structure for the collection, review and analysis.

4. **Provide structure.**
   - Structure collaboration time with clearly mapped goals, objectives, and accountability. Create a long term plan, calendar, and/or schedule of topics and activities for common planning time.
   - Establish guidelines related to the use of protocols, which can be powerful tools in creating a formalized process for collaboration. They help establish ground rules for participation, interactions, and potential distractions. The use of a discussion (or any other) protocol can help structure conversations by specifying how time will be allotted to achieve certain goals such as presenting context, asking clarifying questions, providing and reflecting on feedback, brainstorming, or decision making; for example, protocols can provide structures for ways to examine student work, tune and align curricular documents, provide feedback on lesson plans and teaching, develop common assessments, and identify students for remediation.

5. **Lead and support.**
   - Focus the work of collaborative groups by helping them align their priorities with achievement goals.
   - Provide resources needed to support the work of collaborative teams.
   - Allow teachers to hold the key leadership positions during collaboration time by facilitating group work. Identify subject-area chairpersons or grade-team leads. Work with these teacher leaders to create goals, objectives, and structures for collaboration time.

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School provides an example of teacher collaboration.

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School, located in Worcester, Massachusetts, serves 456 students with 71 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Students with disabilities make up 15 percent of the student population and limited English proficient students 30 percent. The school developed a schoolwide model of teacher collaboration that includes a comprehensive set of meetings woven into teachers' schedules. Teacher collaboration at Jacob Hiatt Magnet School is intentional in its support of the instructional focus on helping students read critically, interpret text, and answer questions completely and intelligently based on text. Collaboration time is driven by student achievement data and is deeply focused on improving instruction.

Collaboration time is structured to support identified instructional foci with opportunities for teachers to meet in "vertical teams" and review student work and examine student-level data. Collaboration time includes regular and ongoing weekly and monthly grade-level team meetings and full staff meetings two to three times per month, after school. Teams receive guidance from the instructional leadership team and use protocols and other strategies to ensure optimal use of time. Coverage is provided by the principal, assistant principal, and specialist teachers to allow teacher teams to have at least 60–90 minutes of uninterrupted collaboration time.

SCHOOLWIDE BEST PRACTICES

The school has identified and adopted three best practices to be used by all teachers in support of student learning: *time dedicated to open response daily in every classroom, modeling, and use of T-charts*. Teacher collaboration is focused on supporting the refinement of these best practices. The school helps to ensure the success of these efforts through ongoing use of data and monitoring of implementation through a process called "rounds."

Use of Data

Data are routinely used to understand how student achievement is impacted by changes to instructional practice. This information is then used to inform the school's continuous instructional improvement efforts.

Rounds

The collaboration model at Jacob Hiatt Magnet School also includes a process referred to as "Rounds." This process consists of small groups of teachers who collaborate to better understand the teaching-learning process within individual classrooms via pre-arranged "Rounds" visits. Teachers participate as either "observers" or "host teachers" and the professional learning process is facilitated by well-defined roles for each participant, pre-round orientation meetings, and post-round opportunities for reflection and discussion.

The Effective Use of Teacher Collaboration Time to Advance Student Achievement. A Living Case Study. (2010). Retrieved June, 24 2011, from www.mass2020.org

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Doing What Works (Website)
http://dww.ed.gov/

Doing What Works (Website)
http://dww.ed.gov/How-to-Organize-Your-Teaching/Higher-Order-Questions/see/?T_ID=19&P_ID=43

Doing What Works, Essential Questions (Publication)
http://dww.ed.gov/launcher.cfm?media/CL/OIS/HQ/See/584_hq_mats_essential_questions.pdf

Doing What Works, Using Higher Order Questions to Encourage Explanations (Publication)
http://dww.ed.gov/launcher.cfm?media/CL/OIS/HQ/See/585_hq_mats_student_explanation-1.pdf

Doing What Works, Socratic Seminar Planning Form (Publication)
http://dww.ed.gov/launcher.cfm?media/CL/OIS/HQ/See/583_hq_mats_seminars.pdf

Focus on Effectiveness, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Website)
http://www.netc.org/focus/strategies/

IES Practice Guide on *Organizing instruction and study to improve student learning* (Publication)
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/20072004.pdf

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

Recommendation 3: Instructional Rigor and Feedback

Implement instructional strategies that increase opportunities for higher-order thinking, analysis and problem solving, deeper content understanding, and that encourage high-quality instructional feedback between teacher and students or among students.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Instruction that pushes students to engage in higher-level thinking leads to deeper learning for students (Marzano, Pickering, and 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).

A meta-analysis of research, conducted on instructional feedback, found it to be one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement (Hattie & Timperly, 2007). In *The Power of Feedback,* authors note that "feedback can be conceptualized as information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding."

"Many teachers spend a considerable proportion of their instructional time in whole-class discussions or question-and-answer sessions, but these sessions tend to rehearse existing knowledge rather than create new knowledge for students." Furthermore, teachers generally listen for the "correct" answer instead of listening for what they can learn about the students' thinking" (Davis, 1997).

Research indicates that (a) telling students that answers are right or wrong has a negative effect on achievement; (b) providing students with correct answers has a moderate effect; (c) explaining what is correct and what is not correct has a greater effect. (Marzano et al., 2001).

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 (2011), 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.
   - 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 and learn to respond effectively during whole-class discussions, and when providing feedback to individual students and small groups.**
   - Identify workshops and other professional learning opportunities for teachers to learn the value of feedback. Focus professional development on building opportunities for student explanations in the classroom.
   - Support teacher collaboration by giving them tools designed to help them reflect on a peer's practice. Observations should focus on the use of questioning and feedback in classroom discussions, and provide feedback to the teacher being observed on the questions they ask and the kinds of student responses those questions generated.
   - Provide examples for teachers to discuss how educators can help students to make their thinking visible and get feedback on their explanations. Discuss the strengths and weakness of various instructional approaches used to encourage explanations.
   - 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 24, 2011, from http://centerforaiw.com/sites/centerforaiw.com/files/Authentic-Instruction-Assessment-BlueBook.pdf

4. **Provide opportunities for teachers to incorporate instructional strategies that facilitate high-quality feedback into curriculum documents and lesson plans.**

   There are many ways in which teachers can deliver feedback to students and for students to receive feedback from teachers, peers, and other sources. For students, it means gaining information about how and what they understand and misunderstand, finding directions and strategies that they must take to improve, and seeking assistance to understand the goals of the learning (Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991). The Teaching Center (2009) at Washington University in St. Louis has identified a number of ways teachers can ask questions to improve learning:

   - **Include notes of when they will pause to ask and answer questions.** Asking questions throughout the class will not only make the class more interactive, but also help teachers measure and improve student learning.
   - **"Ask a mix of different types of questions….** [U]se *'closed' questions*, or questions that have a limited number of correct answers, to test students' comprehension and retention of important information. …[Also] ask *managerial questions* to ensure, for example, that your students understand an assignment or have access to necessary materials. *'Open' questions,* which prompt multiple and sometimes conflicting answers, are often the most effective in encouraging discussion and active learning in the classroom."
   - **Wait for students to think and formulate responses.** Waiting 5–10 seconds will increase the number of students who volunteer to answer and will lead to longer, more complex answers. If students do not volunteer before 5 seconds have passed, teachers should refrain from answering their own question, which will only communicate to students that if they do not answer, teachers will do their thinking for them. If the students are unable to answer after sufficient time for thinking has passed, rephrase the question.
   - **Do not interrupt students' answers.** Often, teachers find themselves wanting to interrupt because they think they know what the student is going to say, or simply because they are passionate about the material. Teachers should resist this temptation. Hearing the students' full responses will allow them to give them credit for their ideas and to determine when they have not yet understood the material.
   - **Show interest in students' answers, whether right or wrong.** Teachers should encourage students when they are offering answers by nodding, looking at them, and using facial expressions that show they are listening and engaged.
   - **Develop responses that keep students thinking.** For example, ask the rest of the class to respond to an idea that one student has just presented, or ask the student who answered to explain the thinking that led to her answer.
   - **If a student gives an incorrect or weak answer, point out what is incorrect or weak about the answer, but ask the student a follow-up question that will lead that student, and the class, to the correct or stronger answer.** For example, a teacher might note that the student's answer overlooks the most important conclusion of the topic being discussed. In this case, the teacher should then ask that same student to

try to recall what that conclusion is. If he or she does not recall the conclusion, open this question up to the class.

- **Follow a "yes-or- no" question with an additional question.** For example, follow up by asking students to explain why they answered the way they did, to provide evidence or an example, or to respond to a yes-or-no answer given by another student. It's insufficient and shortsighted to rely on quick, right answers as indications of students' knowledge of subject matter. Probe children's thinking when they respond. Ask: *Why do you think that? Why does that make sense? Convince us. Prove it. Does anyone have a different way to think about the problem? Does anyone have another explanation?*

Good Feedback

- Clear and unambiguous
- Specific
- Supportive, formative and developmental
- Timely
- Understood

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Normal Park Museum Magnet Elementary School

Normal Park Museum Magnet Elementary School focuses on curriculum planning and effective instructional strategies.

In 2001, the school was low-performing and on the state list to be shut down. Since adopting the museum magnet curriculum, Normal Park has seen an increase in student achievement, as measured by test scores, for all subgroups. In 2007, the school met criteria for AYP. Ninety-six percent of all students, including 93 percent of economically disadvantaged students and 95 percent of African-American students, scored proficient in reading.

Administrators at the school support the use of higher-order questions through professional development targeted to their instructional focus. Instructional "modules" are developed by grade-level teams and are driven by essential questions. Beginning in the early grades, students are expected to be able to provide rich explanations. To support this, teachers use open-ended questions, follow-up questions, and scaffold instruction so that all students are able to engage in critical thinking.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND SUPPORTS

- Administrators at this school support the use of higher-order questions through professional development that focus on curriculum planning and effective instructional strategies.
- Administrators program planning time prior to the start of each instructional "module" for teachers to plan and think in grade-level teams.
- The entire pedagogical staff engages in faculty seminars around designing understandings, essential questions and assessments using Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe *Understanding By Design*.
- During team meetings, teachers engage in planning questions in feedback by asking themselves *What is the depth in this content and how do I gear students in that direction? What questions should I ask?*
- Teachers plan to ask "question upon question" to get students to a deeper and more in-depth answer. Teachers are encouraged to probe and ask more questions to get more depth and more detail.
- Teachers at the school use Socratic Seminars, or text-based discussions to engage students in rigorous conversations. These conversations involve a series of open-ended and probing questions. Teachers ask follow-up questions to elicit more elaborate explanations.

Description excerpted from the *Doing What Works* website at http://dww.ed.gov/How-to-Organize-Your-Teaching/Higher-Order-Questions/see/index.cfm?T_ID=19&P_ID=43&c1=559. This information is in the public domain.

Recommendation 4: Schoolwide Behavior Management System

Develop and implement a common set of positive behavior expectations and a system for acknowledging and supporting appropriate behavior across the smaller learning communities. 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 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 (1) impulse control, (2) anger management, (3) conflict resolution, (4) empathy, and (5) 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 (Sprague, 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 or 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 research-based application of lessons learned from more than 7,000 schools currently implementing successful changes in their school environment. SWPBS evolved from valid research in the field of special education.

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Alcott Middle School Behavior Expectations and Related Teaching Materials (Video)
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

SWPBS is not a curriculum, intervention, or practice but a decision-making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidenced-based behavioral practices for improving important academic outcomes for all students (Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2011).

Researchers have only recently begun to study the effects of schoolwide behavioral management systems and what it takes to implement these systems effectively. Although it is too early to offer "recipes for success," the work of key researchers and their school-based colleagues are providing some encouraging developments. Although there are many 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, professional development and long-term commitment by the school leadership are necessary in order for this innovation to take hold. The school-based models featured in the sidebar have been selected to show how different features of a schoolwide behavioral management system can apply across 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 time 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

(Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1997)

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

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

   The Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2011) has established the guiding principles. Included here are those that focus on establishing a set of common behavior expectations:

   - 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. 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 on at least 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 is inclusive of three to five positively stated overarching schoolwide social expectations that are visibly posted around the schools, particularly in problematic areas.
- Teach and encourage prosocial skills and behaviors.
  - Students should be introduced to or 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 evidence-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 focused on individual plans for those who did not respond to the first level. The tertiary level (few students) is highly individualized plans for students who did not respond to the first two levels.
- Monitor data for program effectiveness and make adjustments.
  - There should be a plan for collecting data to evaluate SWPBS outcomes in which data are collected as scheduled and used to evaluate their effectiveness for future adjustments.

2. **Build a team.**

   Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project (2005) outlines a process that provides a systematic structure and formalized procedures that can be implemented during the summer. The initial steps to be taken should be to establish and obtain all staff 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 administration supports the process, takes an active role as the rest of the team, 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 patterns of and/or extremely disruptive or disrespectful instances of behavior "in the moment" (e.g., immediate referrals to a dean/counselor/administration, in-school "timeout room," etc. and criteria for reentry)?
- What is 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, fieldtrips, 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 acknowledgment of appropriate behaviors.
- Give students multiple opportunities to respond and participate during instruction
- Actively supervise 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: Positive Behavior Support Classroom Management: Self-Assessment Revised, *by Brandi Simonsen, Sarah Fairbanks, Amy Briesch, and George Sugai,* (2006).

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Jonesboro Middle School

Jonesboro Middle School in Jonesboro, Georgia, serves students in Grades 6–8. The school has had success in implementing Effective Behavioral and Instructional Supports (EBIS).

Jonesboro Middle School (JMS) has a population of 558 students, a 65 percent poverty rate, and sits in the center of Clayton County, Georgia. JMS also is a model demonstration school for the state of Georgia's School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) 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 SWPBS effort that Georgia calls Effective Behavioral and Instructional Supports (EBIS). The team 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 SWPBS can have many benefits. The JMS team developed three simple rules, or behavioral expectations, for their school. Once they were developed, the team took the expectations to the entire staff for approval. The staff settled on the following set of behavioral expectations:

- Be respectful of self, others, and property.
- Be responsible and prepared at all times.
- 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 of the bushes or coming out from around a tree to give them a gotcha for picking up litter and respecting property. Students in the cafeteria are quick to assist someone who drops a tray because they never know when someone will be watching to give them a gotcha for respecting their neighbor.

Prior to implementing EBIS, JMS dealt with 1,252 office discipline referrals (ODRs). In the first year of EBIS implementation, they dealt with only 674 ODRs. Assuming the average ODR takes approximately 15 minutes to address, 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 (2011), available online at http://www.pbis.org/school/primary_level/case_examples.aspx. This document is in the public domain.

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Appendix

The Path to Success: School Improvement Planning Calendar

Educational researchers find that successful schools focus their improvement efforts on a few key areas. The school improvement planning calendar was created as an optional tool to help M.S. 302 develop and implement four key areas of focus that if implemented with fidelity will lead to whole-school improvement. As with all school improvement processes, M.S. 302 should ensure it has the support of its stakeholders (people who have an interest in your school, including students, parents, administrators, teachers, other school staff and volunteers, local residents and businesses, community organizations, and corporate partners) and the school leadership team.

During school year 2011–12, the school may wish to utilize this improvement calendar as a guide for implementing the specific action steps that should be taken each quarter to apply the recommendations outlined in this report.

	SUMMER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
Student Engagement		▪ Revise curriculum maps to reflect frequency and adolescent perspective topic being implemented per lesson and/or unit ▪ Provide professional development on the adolescent perspective to: 1. Implement choice and student autonomy and leadership 2. Make the curriculum relevant 3. Make learning authentic ▪ Incorporate Adolescent Perspective into classroom observation tool (develop rubric)	▪ Monitor (administrators) adolescent perspective strategies via classroom observations, lesson plans and units	▪ Monitor (administrators) adolescent perspective strategies via classroom observations, lesson plans and units ▪ Provide specific review professional development on adolescent perspective to: 1. Implement choice and student autonomy and leadership 2. Make the curriculum relevant 3. Make learning authentic	▪ Monitor (administrators) adolescent perspective strategies via classroom observations, lesson plans and unit ▪ Determine the level of adolescent perspective occurring across classrooms (grade levels and departments) via observation rubric ▪ Based on rubric data, revise professional development and other supports for teachers (grades and/or departments)
Instructional Rigor and Feedback	▪ Align instruction with P-12 Common Core Learning Standards ▪ Develop a shared understanding of instructional rigor through collaborative curriculum planning, design and/or redesign ▪ Identify and schedule professional learning opportunities, including workshop and structured collaboration time, which focus on instructional rigor and quality feedback.	▪ Incorporate discussions of higher order thinking and feedback practices into teacher collaboration time ▪ Monitor (administrators) higher order thinking and feedback strategies via classroom observations, lesson plans and review of student tasks and assessments ▪ Develop common assignments through teacher collaboration that ask students to perform rigorous and authentic tasks ▪ Develop common assessments through teacher collaboration that include rigorous and authentic summative assessment tasks	▪ Incorporate discussions of higher order thinking and feedback practices into teacher collaboration time ▪ Monitor (administrators) higher order thinking and feedback strategies via classroom observations, lesson plans and review of student tasks and assessments ▪ Monitor (administrators) implementation using student achievement results on common formative and summative assessments	▪ Incorporate discussions of higher order thinking and feedback practices into teacher collaboration time ▪ Monitor (administrators) higher order thinking and feedback strategies via classroom observations, lesson plans and review of student tasks and assessments ▪ Provide professional development for teachers higher order thinking pedagogy in the classroom and ways to differentiate, Universal Design for Learning and/or Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol	▪ Incorporate discussions of higher order thinking and feedback practices into teacher collaboration time ▪ Monitor (administrators) higher order thinking and feedback strategies via classroom observations, lesson plans and review of student tasks and assessments ▪ Monitor implementation using student achievement results on common formative and summative assessments ▪ Revisit curriculum maps (lesson plans), formative and summative assessments and adjust for 2012-13 ▪ Revisit professional development and adjust for 2012-13
Schoolwide Behavior Management System	▪ Develop (SWPBIS) a continuum of scientifically based behavior interventions and supports ▪ Arrange environment to prevent the development and occurrence of problem behavior ▪ Provide professional development to staff on SWPBIS and on how to teach and encourage prosocial skills and behaviors	▪ Teach (all) and encourage prosocial skills and behaviors ▪ Implement (all) evidenced based behavioral management practices with fidelity and accountability ▪ Observe PBIS in the classroom and provide feedback ▪ Monitor (SWPBIS) data for program effectiveness and adjust	▪ Teach (all) and encourage prosocial skills and behaviors ▪ Implement (all) evidenced based behavioral management practices with fidelity and accountability ▪ Observe (administrators) for PBIS in the classroom and provide feedback ▪ Monitor (SWPBIS) data for program effectiveness and adjust ▪ Use data to make decisions and solve problems	▪ Teach (all) and encourage prosocial skills and behaviors ▪ Implement (all) evidenced based behavioral management practices with fidelity and accountability ▪ Observe (administrators) PBIS in the classroom and provide feedback ▪ Monitor (SWPBIS) data for program effectiveness and adjust	▪ Teach (all) and encourage prosocial skills and behaviors ▪ Implement (all) evidenced based behavioral management practices with fidelity and accountability ▪ Observe (administrators) PBIS in the classroom and provide feedback ▪ Monitor (SWPBIS) data for program effectiveness and adjust for 2012-13 ▪ Use data to make decisions and solve problems
Teacher Cellaboration	▪ Create a long term plan, calendar, and/or schedule of topics and activities for common planning time ▪ Provide sufficient time for teacher collaboration in the school schedule for content area teachers and special education teachers to share information and ideas that will benefit all students. ▪ Identify constraints of teacher contract	▪ Create a joint general/special education team that meets regularly to ensure content and pacing are differentiated to meet the needs of all students. ▪ Train staff regarding effective communication and collaboration skills ▪ Conduct a data-driven needs assessment to determine topics for collaborative sessions	▪ Use results of the data-driven needs assessment to determine topics for collaborative sessions ▪ Monitor (administration) collaborative teams by collecting and providing immediate feedback on agendas, activities, and outcomes of meetings ▪ Establish guidelines for protocol use ▪ Embed scheduled data analysis in collaborative time	▪ Use results of the data-driven needs assessment to determine topics for collaborative sessions ▪ Monitor (administration) collaborative teams by collecting and providing immediate feedback on agendas, activities, and outcomes of meetings ▪ Dedicate extended time to collaborative teams (e.g. in-service days, assemblies, etc.)	▪ Use results of the data-driven needs assessment to determine topics for collaborative sessions ▪ Monitor (administration) collaborative teams by collecting and providing immediate feedback on agendas, activities, and outcomes of meetings ▪ Dedicate extended time to collaborative teams (e.g. in-service days, assemblies, etc.) ▪ Evaluate collaborative teams' using student performance, observation data and input from specialists to determine effectiveness and adjust for 2012-13

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