Implementation of Focused Team Meetings

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to find a way to make sure all of our team meetings were done with clarity and focus. We knew we had a great structure and routine in place, but the focus of the meetings needed attention. Knowing this, we realized we must use a common template for planning. The template and all conversation must be about students, not the adults. We started by creating our Vision, Mission, and Core Values and created a template from there.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered, in what ways can the use of a common focused template for agenda/minutes improve team meeting effectiveness?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into our wondering, we started with as staff survey to get a baseline of how teachers felt about grade level team meetings. Based on this information we knew there were many inconsistencies we needed to address as a school. The fist thing we did as a Leadership Team was to create a focus. This came came to be after a PLC training our whole team attended. We are not currently a PLC structured school. But, this helped up realized we needed to start somewhere.

The next thing our team did was take an afternoon and create our overall Vision, Mission, and Core Values. The Core Values are what we wanted to focus on for each team meeting. We created three Core Values (Academic, Behavior, and Social). These Core Values would be the focus for all future team meetings. After this was created, we created a template for all team leaders to use to help run their meetings. The template was to create focus, stay on task, and keep meetings student centered, along with encouraging full team member input.

A survey was conducted in October in order to get baseline data in regards to how each teacher felt about team meetings prior to implementing the common template and agenda in which the Leadership Team created. The data painted a clear picture for us. We were all over the place. Our data was different from grade level to grade level and inconsistent from one teacher to another, even in the same grade level. We knew that sharing the agenda/template prior to the meetings, encouraging input for each meeting ahead of time, and staying focused would without a doubt help and show improvement over time.

Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing our data, some important things we learned were that we had a good structure in place with our team meetings, but we needed to be more student centered, timely and focused on our newly created Core Values.

Using Google Forms, we were able to see that by putting a common template/agenda in place for six months, we made huge gains with how our teachers felt about team meetings. The survey results were a 1-4 scale, 4 being the highest or best rating (strongly agree). The first question was, "Our team time is valuable", moved from approximately 89% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 100% in March. The second question was, "Our team time provides opportunities for teachers to work, plan and think together", moved from approximately 75% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 87% in March. The third question was, "Our team time provides time for reflection and improving practice," moved from approximately 65% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 84% in March. Our fourth question was, "Our team time provides time to develop a school culture to improve achievement of students," moved from approximately 89% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 100% in March. Our fifth question was, "Our team time provides time for sharing of best practices," moved from approximately 69% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 77% in March. The sixth question was, "Our team time provides time to track students and progress," moved from approximately 69% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 81% in March. Our seventh question was, "Our team time provides time to develop interventions for students," moved from approximately 83% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 84% in March. Our eighth question was, "Our time is valuable and team time is purposeful and meaningful," moved from approximately 86% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 93.5% in March. Our final question was, "I feel encouraged to provide input for the agenda and during meeting time, " moved from approximately 85% feeling it was (rating a 3 or 4) in October to 97% in March. The growth we showed by simply trying to be more focused in a team meeting, with a common/template agenda in place made a great impact on our meeting time, creating focus and purpose.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

In conclusion, we have found that although we had some good things in place already, we had and still have much room for growth. The Professional Learning Community (PLC) model is a new experience for us. We hope to continue implementing more pieces to this model over time. The pre and post survey we did with the staff was very informative. Not only did it help us as a school, it helped us as individual grade level teams, providing us data more specific to the different grade level team meetings. With this information, the team leaders were able to create their own areas of weakness to address throughout the school year.

As we move forward, we hope to grow in many other areas by finding and implementing appropriate professional development opportunities for our staff. We will be focusing on what our instruction expectations in every classroom should look like, create a more common vocabulary school-wide focus, continue to improve our interventions for students (RtI process), and finally, not lose focus on our Core Values in every decision we make, putting student needs first.

References:

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