



[Creating a positive and productive learning environment where all staff and students feel safe and respected]

Principal Name: David Verta

School Name: Hammond Central H.S

Team Members' Names: Megan Tiscareno & Nate Foor

Principal's Email Contact: daverta@hammond.k12.in.us

Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2)

Outline what led your team to this particular inquiry. Include the following:

- Consolidation process going from 4 high schools down to 2 high schools.
- Staffing issues especially in science, math, and special ed
 - Teachers leaving for other districts
- Implementing a new instructional framework – New Tech
 - Hoping to be 100% new tech by 2005
- How can we empower teachers, so they are 100% on board?

The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to create a positive and productive learning environment where all staff and students feel safe, respected, and valued.

Our Wondering (Slide 4)

How do we get buy-in from our 9th grade teachers to create a positive and productive learning environment that will lead our students to success?

Our Actions (Slide 5-6)

- Developed a common why with our year 1 cohort
- Worked with New Tech to create a PD calendar
- Created a freshman New Tech wing
- PLCs every Wednesday
- Learning walk-throughs

Data Collection (Slide 7)

- Student and staff surveys
- Grading period 1,2, and 3 projects
- PBL open house
- End of grading period 1,2, and 3 grades and semester 1 grades

Our Data (Slides 7)

Based on our student surveys we feel that we are headed in the right direction. We must remember that most of our students were virtual learners for 18 months (about 1 and a half years). We must re-teach them how to do school again. We also must take into consideration our staff. We had a lot of students that did not want to come back to the building. They wanted to remain virtual learners. School City of Hammond Teachers were also allowed to work from home. Overall teacher morale was exceptionally low at the beginning of the year. We feel that it is improving as we move forward.

For the PBL open house we had over 85% of our students with a finished project to present. This was up 35% from grading period 1 when we only had 50% with a finished product.

The total number of 9th grade “fs” from grading period 1 to grading period 3 dropped 10%. We feel students are starting to get comfortable with the expectations.

Our Discoveries (Slide 8)

In this step, summarize your team’s learning in two - three succinct statements that illustrate the most important and critical facets of what your team learned:

- Professional Development is extremely important
 - Make meaningful and relevant
- The weekly PLCs allowed for teachers to work together and gave them all a voice. This helped to empower the staff. Helped with the overall buy-in.
- We need to do more check-ins with students. We are thinking of bi-weekly. Once a month or grading period did not really do the trick for us.

Next, restate each learning statement and explain it. The explanation of your team’s learning statement should refer to your data and you should include actual data within the explanation.

Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 9)

In this step, reflect on your team’s research journey that accomplishes the following:

- As a team of building leaders, we understand the importance of having a positive culture. Having a culture that allows students to feel safe and respected will encourage them to try harder and it also gives a true sense of belonging. We knew coming into this journey that we had to focus on our culture, especially with the consolidation. This process allowed us to focus on relationship building and team building. Developing trust is big in our school community and with our stakeholders. We had to get them to trust us and believe in us.
- Looking at cohort 2, remembering that we need to be 100% New Tech by 2024. This past year provided us with real data to help us plan as we move forward. One area that

we really need to focus on more is getting student and staff feedback more often. We cannot just do it once a grading period. We will be trying 2 times per grading period. This will help us stay current on student needs and issues.

- We are worried about staffing. We usually have 5 or 6 teachers that leave for other districts. This is not good for a school trying to be 100% New Tech. You find yourself training a teacher, then the teacher leaves and then you have to start all over. This brings us back to a strong positive culture for not only students but staff. An environment where staff want to come back and be a part of.
- Making sure we have a clear professional development calendar
- Making sure our students have a voice. It is important to empower our staff

Bibliography (Slide 13)

Baruti, Kafele K. (2013). *Closing the Attitude Gap*. Alexandria, Virginia

Juliani, A.J.(2018) *The PBL Playbook*. Naperville, Illinois

Gruenert, Steve., Whitaker, Todd. (2015). *School Culture Rewired*. Alexandria, Virginia

Presentation

Tiscareno, M., Foor, N., & Verta, D. (2022). Creating a positive and productive learning environment where all staff and students feel safe and respected. Presented at the annual Indiana Principal Leadership Institute Showcase of Schools, Indianapolis, IN.