

Reaching for Reliability

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

Our inquiry was a not a traditional inquiry. At the onset of our journey, our school was beginning its 7th year in operations. Over the 7 years, we had proven to be highly successful in terms of test scores, school grades, and a very happy school community! We had proven to be the top performing charter schools in the state for a few years and were regularly outperforming many of our neighborhood schools, which is not an easy task since we are nestled inside of the Duneland School boundaries. Our goal for the year, was to not just sustain our good standing, but put things in place to make sure we are continuing to improve. Implementing PLC and related initiatives is the path we decided we needed to take!

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered how we can use PLC and related initiatives to continue to improve our school.

Methods/Procedures:

Meeting Norms and Non-Negotiables

During Back to School PD in August we led our staff through activities to identify characteristics of behaviors and instruction that we should Always, Sometimes, and Never See. This activity then evolved into establishing Discovery's Non-Negotiables and Meeting Norms.

Discovery Charter School Instructional Model

We provided our staff with a few weeks to reflect on the established Meeting Norms and Non-Negotiables. Once we made the necessary revisions on those two components, we launched the process of designing a framework in efforts to create consistent expectations when designing and implementing lesson plans. Through collaboration with staff we created the Discovery Charter School Instructional Model that teachers use as a tool to ensure the students are receiving a highly reliable education. This document is posted in every room and also shared with our Board of Directors and is available on our website for all stakeholders to see.

Math Priority Standards

Continuing with our work of creating reliability through PLCs our next step involved identifying Math Priority Standards. As educators we are often overwhelmed by the number of standards and often find ourselves focusing on the quantity of standards instead of the quality of standards we teach. Priority Standards are a shared document so all staff are on the same page and a modified version will also be posted on the website for all stakeholders to see. Poster sized versions of the standards will also be on display in the teacher's lounge/PD room as well.

Math Essential Vocabulary

Once priority standards were created, teachers developed their grade level math essential vocabulary that their students will know before leaving their doors at the end of the year. Essential Vocabulary Words will also be available on the school website for all stakeholders and also displayed in the teachers lounge/PD room.

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

Here is a link to our Reaching for Reliability Smore that was shared at the Spring Showcase; which includes pictures of some of the work throughout the year.

<https://www.smores.com/ys2dm-reaching-for-reliability>

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

What's Next?

This year served as our planning year, building the foundation for the coming years.

Priority Standards - Curriculum maps will be built around these, ensuring they are mastered before the end of the year (with the other standards being added in as they fit or as time allows).

Essential Vocabulary - These terms will be included in classroom instruction and mastered by the end of the grade level. They also will be shared with specials and support staff so that they can intentionally include as it make sense with their work.

Instructional Model - Informal walk-through checklist will be created to be used by Administrators to provide instant feedback to staff as it relates to the instructional model.

January 2018 - Staff will begin Priority Standards for English/Language Arts.

References:

N/A