

Bringing Two Elementary Schools Closer through Communication, Curriculum, and Language

Jefferson Craig Elementary School:

Principal: Tony Spoores

tspoores@switzsc.org

Team Members: Jennifer Chase & Lacey Peelman

Action Research Project

(Cohort 8)



Background Leading to our Inquiry

Understanding the Need:

When assessing the need to conduct an action research for our building, the team considered a few indicators.

- A mini AR was conducted in the area of school climate/culture. This started the AR process for us and helped to see other possible areas of school growth.
- The process (AR inquiry) changed over the course of the next month as the team analyzed data from Marzano's Highly Reliable Schools surveys.
 - 1) Data collection and distribution
 - 2) Collaboration of trust, and high expectations

Purpose of Our Inquiry

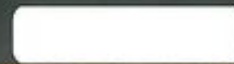
Perception is Reality:

Many times this is the case. But how does one change the outlook of something? Change, in of itself is usually viewed as hard and/or negative.

- To challenge our colleagues to think differently
- To develop a growth mindset throughout both elementary schools
- To align vocabulary, curriculum, and establish an atmosphere of sustainable positive change relaying information horizontally and vertically

Our Wondering

We wonder, what can we do to help both elementary schools move in the same direction concerning communication with curriculum and language alignment?

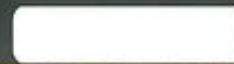


Our Actions

- Set agenda to present to the Cur. Director and other elementary principal
- Conduct monthly team meetings
- Analyze and put into action the results of presentation outcome from meeting with CD and other principal
 - Create monthly Google Meets with both buildings
 - Allow time at quarterly curriculum meetings for schools to collaborate
 - Align CFAs, Pacing Guides, Standards, & Vocabulary

Data Collection

- Notes from initial discussion with Cir. Director and other principal
- Notes from meetings with Team Leaders
- Common creation of CFAs, Pacing Guides, and Vocab
- Putting actions into practice...are both staffs using what they have learned and do we here the common vocab
- Results from staff survey



Our Data

Agenda - Discussion with Curriculum Director and Elementary Principals

Questions:

- 1) What do you think about having teachers view other teachers while teaching to learn best practices
 - a) This would not be evaluative
 - b) We could learn what to do and not do
 - c) This would happen in both buildings and then switch to have teachers visit classrooms in each others buildings
- 2) Do we know enough about each other for this to be truly effective

Feedback - This is a great idea but not sure the timing is right. We need to get both buildings on the same page. We need to make sure best practices are happening across the board. We need to look at the rigor of our CFAs, Power Standard alignment, and common "core" vocabulary. When these things are aligned properly then we will be ready.

Our Data

Alternative Direction:

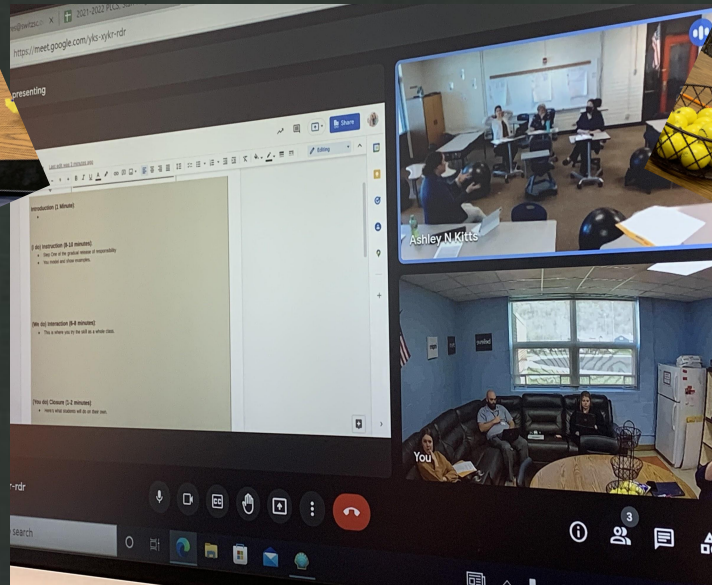
- 1) What can we do to open up communication between both elementary schools
- 2) We have been working on our CFAs and Pacing guides...how are they matching up
- 3) Aligning our language - Core Vocabulary in subject areas (state level 2 and level 3)

This lead us to our Wondering:

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Our Data



1.RN.4.2 - identify, difference, similarity, non-fiction text, topic
1.RV.2.1 - context clue, glossary, illustration, text feature

Grade 1 Math

1.G.4 - partition, equal parts, rectangle, fraction, half, fourth, quarter, decompose
1.M.2 - analog clock, digital clock
1.M.3 - penny, nickel, dime, value, collection
1.NS.1 - Count on
1.NS.6 - Tens, ones
1.OA.1 - decompose, sum, difference, addend, Addition, subtraction
1.OA.2 - Sum, difference, Addition, Subtraction
1.OA.5 - Sum, addend, Addition, place value, compose
1.OA.6 - Equal sign, Addition, Subtraction

- ★ Creating Common Vocabulary
- ★ Updating Pacing Guides & CFAs
- ★ Google Meets with grade levels horizontally and vertically

Grade 1 ELA

1.RL.2.3 - Character, describe, identify, key detail, plot, setting
1.RM.2.1 - answer, ask, key details, clarify, Confirm, text
1.RM.2.2 - key details, main idea, Non-fiction text, retell
1.RM.4.1 - identify, reason, non-fiction text, Support
1.RV.2.1 - Main Idea, key details, text
1.RV.4.2 - identify, difference, similarity, non-fiction text, topic
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Our Data

Some Questions on our Teacher Survey

- 1) Have the Google Meets been beneficial for you and your team? (Please explain...)
- 2) What have you liked about the half day Curriculum Trainings? (Please explain...)
- 3) What are some changes you would like to see happen for future trainings? (Please explain...)

Our Discoveries

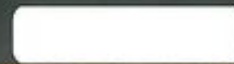
What are 3 important facets we have learned:

- Time together is priceless
- The need to be on the same page
- Teachers will follow, but they desire to have clear expectations and the “why”



Where we Are Heading Next

- By the end of the year we want to conduct the teacher survey.
- We are still not finished. This process will take us into next year to finish up vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment and creation/use of common vocabulary.
- A goal moving forward is to get into each others buildings and watch each other teach.



Bibliography

Dana, N. (2009). *“Leading with Passion and Knowledge”*. Published by Corwin.

Marzano, R., Warrick, P., Cameron R., & Dufour D. (2018). *“Leading A Highly Reliability School”*. Published by Solution Tree Press.



Bringing Two Elementary Schools Closer through Communication, Curriculum, and Language

Principal Name: Tony Spoores

School Name: Jefferson Craig Elementary School

Team Members' Names: Jennifer Chase & Lacey Peelman

Principal's Email Contact: tspoores@switzsc.org

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- The need to be on the same page
- Teachers will follow, but they desire to have clear expectations and the “why”

Time together is priceless - When teachers are able to collaborate together greater things will be accomplished and in less time. Never underestimate the power of a team!

The need to be on the same page - We have a lot of students that are transits. They frequently move from one building to the next. We have found being on the same page very beneficial. We also have students that move from building to building due to special education needs.

Teachers will follow, but like to know the “why” - To keep driving the staff forward, they like to stay informed. We have found that explaining the direction we want to go may take a little longer, but the results are 10 times better. A happy staff is a productive staff...

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