

Promising Practices and Implementation Tools

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3. District(s) Where Implemented: Attleboro Public Schools

4. Lever Addressed and Title of Promising Practice: Supervision and Evaluation

5. How This Practice reflects District's Mission and Core Values:

The Attleboro Public Schools' core values and mission reflects the district's commitment to ensuring excellence for all students. This is consistent with the four standards of the new Supervision and Evaluation System: Curriculum, Planning and Assessment, Teaching all Students, Family and Community Engagement, and Professional Culture. Four years ago, the district overhauled its evaluation system to make it more progressive. Thus the groundwork, in terms of underlying philosophy driving the approach, was already strong, and reflects many of the tenets of the new DESE Supervision and Evaluation System. The district's philosophy of change from one system to another, as described by Superintendent Pia Durkin, involved "three C's": collaboration, calibration, and communication". The vision was/is to foster professional growth and reflection among all personnel (teachers, administrators, evaluators), using these "three C's".

High expectations of teacher performance is a core value – the

comprehensive state rubrics have helped define high expectations across all areas of the work teachers do, and mandate the focus on the observations of teaching, and the conversations about teaching and learning.

6. Goals of This Practice:

Continuous improvement in student learning and achievement.

Continuous improvement in teacher performance – seeing teachers in their classrooms is critical but what is at the core of this work is data on expectations of students and student achievement Standards 1 and 2 have always been central to the district’s work. However, heightened attention is now being given to the goal of collaboration among professional staff. Formal standards for collaboration are new to the district and teachers are formally rated on these standards as part of the goal of supporting and implementing them. (2) Teachers are observed regularly, and often, and this is growing as an integral part of our schools’ cultures. In order to lead the work and art of teaching, one needs to know the work and the art intimately, and presence in classrooms, observing teachers, is critical.

7. Description of This Practice and how it Addresses Criteria for this Lever:

Attleboro is in its first year of full implementation of the new Supervision

and Evaluation System. A significant amount of preparation was done prior to training administrators and teachers on the implementation of the new system. The district leadership team partnered with the teachers' union throughout the process. A working group consisting of teachers, administrators and union members was formed to acquaint all representatives with the mission, goals and practical implementation details of the new system. All groups of professionals, from the President of the Union, to the Executive Board, to administrators and teachers, had a voice so that when the contract was negotiated in June 2012, the process was smooth and devoid of conflict. Including the voices of all who will be affected by change is a primary value in the district. Good **collaborative relationships** between union and faculty and full inclusiveness of all may not be a unique idea, but Attleboro "walks the talk". The district invests a great deal of time and energy in building collaborative working relationships where open communication and honest conversation is fostered.

With the increased emphasis on a growth-oriented evaluation system, a larger investment in training administrators to facilitate constructive conversations about teaching and learning was made. Administrators were (and are) trained and expected to conduct evaluations that are fair, and effectively change practice. Fair evaluations imply a common understanding of what good teaching looks like, with evidence to support it. Developing a shared and fair conception of good teaching made **calibration** an integral part of evaluator training. Teachers and

administrators looked at evidence of student learning together to steer the calibration process.

Communication that is consistent and clear is critical to any change initiative. Conversations about the new system began long before any formal training was done to prepare for the new system, and before any implementation of the new system occurred. This led to greater understanding and the sharing of common language about the district's vision, goals and implementation of the new system.

Preparing for full implementation was as follows:

Focus on student learning and achievement was central to all decisions. On the first day of school in September 2012, the Superintendent of Schools presented the vision and the plan for implementing the new Supervision and Evaluation System to the whole district. Beyond this, most training and support has occurred at the building level. There has been common training for all, and then differentiated interventions based on site needs and requests.

Implementation Process:

Evaluators were trained in the summer of 2012, and continue with monthly district leadership meetings focused on this work.

Teachers were trained in accordance with a schedule negotiated with the Union. Training started the first day of school the year prior to implementation, and continued through January, 2012. Ongoing in-service days and training sessions were all mapped out ahead of time.

All training was done internally. The Assistant Superintendent came to know the new system inside out and other district leaders were similarly trained. DESE services and expertise were used in the early adoption phases of the process but the district goal was to build internal capacity to learn and then train others in the new system. This is important for long-term sustainability.

Criteria Addressed within this Practice:

The district promotes a culture of continuous improvement and growth through a combination of formal evaluations and ongoing, informal instructional feedback. Reflection, self-assessment, and self-improvement are designed into the evaluation system for all educators. Educators are evaluated in alignment with the Common Core of Professional Knowledge and Skills.

The evaluation instrument of the district provides for comment and feedback to teachers on a full range of roles, responsibilities and skills of professional teaching – using the new teacher evaluation rubric and all its elements and indicators.

Evaluations incorporate multiple sources of data and use student results in a reasonable and responsible way.

The district provides evaluators with extensive professional development and support to ensure compatibility and congruence with one another, proficiency in observing and analyzing instruction, and skill in communicating instructional feedback. Evaluator professional

development is provided to those new to the evaluator role, and periodic updates are conducted for all personnel.

8. Applicable Grade Levels:

PreK-12

9. How This Practice Changed The District or School:

The new supervision and evaluation system has brought changes to the district as follows: (1) There has been a philosophical and practical shift from treating evaluation as a task or list to be completed to a collaborative approach in which evaluators are more present in classrooms and more communication and conversation about teaching and learning takes place between teachers and their evaluators. (2) The Superintendent of Schools has increased her visibility in classrooms, observing teachers. (3) There have been changes in the criteria for hiring new administrators with a much stronger focus on instructional leadership. Additionally, some difficult but important decisions were made regarding retention (or not) of district leaders.

In a report submitted to the Attleboro School Committee and community in February, 2013, the following data was submitted, as evidence of the advances and accomplishments in the district. There are numerous variables and factors to which the following successes are attributed. School leaders believe the new evaluation system is one of these variables.

There is a steady increase in student achievement.

There is a significant and sustained increase in the graduation rate for Attleboro High School.

There is a dramatic decline in the school drop out rate.

There is a significant increase in the number of students participating in AP courses and 71% of these students scored a 3 or above on the AP tests

There is sustained community support for education

10. Resources (time, money, materials, etc.) required for Successful Implementation:

Leaders and teachers were all trained in the New Evaluation Model

DESE resources and expertise were used to support the professional development planned and implemented at all levels in the system

Professional Developments days were formally set aside for the purpose of focusing on the new evaluation system

12. Tools you used to Implement or Advance this Practice (surveys, needs assessments, technology tools, rubrics, feedback forms, etc.)

Learning Walks, Sample Observation 1 and 2

Activities/Timeline/Benchmarks of Success Template/Chart