

Promising Practices and Implementation Tools

1. Name & Position: Dr. Mary Czajkowski, Superintendent of Schools

2. Email: DrC@barnstable.k12.ma.us **Phone:** 508-862-4953

3. Lever Addressed: Teacher Leadership and Career Advancement

4. Title of Promising Practice: Building Leadership Capacity

5. District(s) Where Implemented: Barnstable Public Schools

6. Applicable Grade Levels: All PreK-12

7. How This Practice Reflects District's Mission & Core Values:

This practice is a natural outgrowth of Barnstable Public School's core values and district wide goals in that it relates to the professional culture goal of promoting "success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff." It is a further belief that all initiatives that take place within BPS, must be closely connected to the district's vision, core values and goals.

8. Goals of This Practice:

- 1.) Build district leadership capacity through participation of administrators and teachers in the National Institute of School Leadership program
- 2.) Build a culture of continuous learning and improvement

9. Description of This Practice and How it Addresses Criteria for This Lever:

The current superintendent arrived at Barnstable Public Schools two years ago and created a 90 day entry plan, developed from various sources of input; School Committee, parents and District Leadership Team, which is made up of the central office administration, principals, assistant principals, house masters and curriculum coordinators.

This plan was shaped during the 2011 summer retreat, when the current Superintendent presented the Conditions for School Effectiveness ([HYPERLINK "http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/district-self-assessment.doc"](http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/district-self-assessment.doc) <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/district-self-assessment.doc>) to the District Leadership Team, with the intent to assess themselves as to where they stood as a district. Relative to the condition of Effective School Leadership, it was determined that Barnstable Public Schools was in the development stage of this condition, i.e. existing at some level but not fully developed or "implemented with fidelity".

The important work of the prior Superintendent to sustain norms/characteristics of high performing teams; walking in other peoples' shoes, assuming positive intent etc., were pervasive and embedded throughout district. However, based on the CFSE self assessment and the growing concern that the leadership pool for attracting and sustaining effective school leaders was a small one, the School Committee and Superintendent agreed that building systemic leadership capacity would become a critical BPS district-wide goal.

Towards that end, the National Institute of School Leadership program (NISL) was contracted to deliver leadership training to willing administrators and teachers. There was also familiarity with this particular program since the Superintendent had initiated the same training in her prior district as well. NISL is an 18 month, 2 days per month training for leaders and aspiring teacher leaders, that is divided into two phases and four course topics:

Phase I– 1) World Class Schooling 2) Teaching and Learning

Phase II– 3) Developing Capacity and Commitment 4) Driving for Results (see attached implementation tools for additional detail)

Twenty-three members of the staff became the first cohort group to participate in this NISL training. The group included all Principals, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, some High School House Masters, Curriculum Coordinators, the President of the Teacher's Union and a few classroom teachers. This intensive work focused on teaching and learning, setting high standards, supervision and evaluation, building team, aligning instruction, professional development, using data effectively and creating safety nets for kids who fall through the cracks. At the core of this work is the concept of distributed leadership with the notion that the important work of teaching, learning and student achievement cannot be accomplished alone.

The involvement of the first cohort resulted in such a great amount of teacher interest, that the superintendent was deluged with requests to start another cohort group. With support of the School Committee and district budget, a second cohort group was then formed consisting of twenty-six more classroom teachers and teacher leaders. Teacher leaders are defined as elementary grade level leaders, curriculum specialists with half time teaching responsibilities and middle and high school department heads. It is also the expectation that classroom teachers participating in the training will become members of each

building based leadership team.

An additional benefit of this second cohort group is that the trainer is a retired BPS principal with first hand knowledge and experience within the district. Overall, the district is proud to acknowledge that within a 36-month period, close to 50 administrators, teacher leaders and teachers will have been trained in building leadership capacity. Once the second group completes the 18 month NISL program, the plan is to bring both cohort groups together to engage in the same conversations, readings etc., and to determine the next steps in continuing to build strong leadership capacity across the district.

As detailed below, this promising practice exemplifies many of the criteria necessary for successful **Teacher Leadership and Career Advancement** as they relate to levers for positive change:

The district utilizes the expertise of teachers to enhance student learning by creating new roles and career opportunities for exemplary teachers to have responsibility for instructional leadership. For example: data coach, curriculum leader, and instructional specialist.

Characteristics:

District has identified, defined and developed teacher leadership roles with the highest leverage for improving student outcomes in the local context.

District has a plan for how teacher leaders will be utilized and implemented. It provides a clear job description for each role, which focuses teacher leadership on instructional improvement (rather than functions such as coordination of testing, or direct services to students).

Support structures, professional development and schedules enable teacher leaders to have the same regular opportunities with colleagues to collaborate.

Leadership teams at the school and district level allow teachers and administrators to collaborate and share decision-making. Teacher-leaders' roles, administrator roles, and leadership team functions are well defined to enable those purposes.

District has established a process for identifying, recruiting, training, and supporting teacher leaders.

Support structures, and operating relationships (e.g. between coach and principal) are clearly defined for maximum effectiveness.

The district has identified qualitative and quantitative indicators and evaluation processes that evaluate the effectiveness of teacher leaders in relation to their defined roles and student outcomes.

The Common Core of Professional Knowledge informs teacher leadership practice.

10. How This Practice Was Implemented So It Was More Successful Than Others:

Expanding leadership capacity within the district has empowered and encouraged principals and teachers to engage in more in depth conversations about teaching and learning. Their joint participation in the NISL program has opened dialogue between principals, teachers and teacher leaders to the extent that they are learning from one another. Approaching this initiative as a district-wide goal has also ensured implementation in a more systemic way, involving teachers and administrators Pre-K through 12.

11. How This Practice Changed The District or School:

Focusing on the goal of building leadership capacity has resulted in some constructive changes across the district:

- Deeper conversations about student learning have allowed teachers a voice around the table. This additional time for collaboration has elicited more teacher buy in and empowered them to have a greater role in the decision making process in areas such as curriculum, instruction, assessments, and determining student support systems.
- The NISL initiative has enabled the district to connect the dots between work on Common Core, new educator evaluation system, closing the achievement gap, and the data analysis each school is doing. This initiative also stimulated the development of a District Improvement Plan as outlined in the Superintendent's Action Learning Project, which includes goals, strategies, action steps and a timeline centered around the new teacher evaluation system.
- Participation in the NISL training has also helped to break down barriers and build trust among administrators and between teachers and administrators. For example, the risk taking involved when principals participate in deeper conversations with a new superintendent; and teachers who may be grouped together from different buildings, all willing to acknowledge what they know and don't know, whether it be in a content area or a specific instructional strategy. It has also been an opportunity to affirm that what teachers have to say is important.
- There is strong School Committee support and the acknowledgement by the superintendent that this is a work in progress. However, in two short years this initiative has created a positive culture throughout the district; a foundation in

which to engage in dialogue and have conversations around teaching and learning that require building trust, time for collaboration, and support for needed resources.

12. Resources (time, money, materials etc.) Required For Successful Implementation:

- RTTT funding for training and related materials for 1st NISL cohort group
- District budget allocation for training and related materials for 2nd NISL cohort group (\$4,000 per person)
- Release time and substitute teacher support for participants
- Support of School Committee, Administration and teachers

13. Tools You Used To Implement Or Advance This Practice:

See separate attachments:

- 1.) District Goals
- 2.) NISL- Training Overview
- 3.) NISL training- Teacher Leader Reflection #1
- 4.) NISL training- Teacher Leader Reflection #2

National Institute of School Leadership website: <http://www.nisl.net>