

## **READING: PROMISING PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS**

The following are the Levers for Educator Excellence that most closely apply to the practice detailed below:

### **Supervision and Evaluation Professional Culture**

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- **Title of Promising Practice:** Growth Not “Got You”: Using an Existing Infrastructure for Successfully Implementing the New Massachusetts Supervision and Evaluation System
- **District where implemented:** Reading MA Public Schools
- **How would you describe this practice?** As both an early adopter for the Massachusetts Supervision and Evaluation System and a Race to the Top district, the Reading Public School district has built upon its already existing infrastructures to spearhead its implementation of the new system. Most notably, it has done so by expanding the role and size of its standing Supervision and Evaluation Committee called TAP (Teacher Assessment Process), which now includes two to three teachers per building from its one preschool, five neighborhood elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. The committee itself has been in existence since 2003 and now numbers the Superintendent and one of the union vice-presidents as active members. By the fall of 2012, the committee numbered 20-25 stable, core members whose charge was to work strategically to refine the evaluation process already started by the district several years ago when it developed a five-step system with rubrics and trained all committee members and administrators in SMART

goals. To accomplish this work, the committee meets on a monthly basis and during the summer.

In the summer of 2012, the Superintendent began the implementation process by developing a supervision and evaluation training booklet that was used to train all principals and committee members. In September, Dr. Doherty followed that effort by creating a recorded PowerPoint for the principals for use in training teachers in the new system in September. In-service days early in the school year focused on developing strong SMART goals that aligned with school improvement plans and the district strategy. Exemplars were developed for the teachers to use as assistance in the development process. During that training, principals encouraged teachers to work in teams to develop their SMART goals collaboratively so that, with the assistance of TAP committee members at the building level, by November 15<sup>th</sup> all educator plans were complete.

Later in the 2012-13 school year, the TAP committee oversaw the application of a technology tool from Baseline Edge to collect data for supervision and evaluation. Though the tool had originally been introduced to Reading at a conference and purchased for use for student data, the district subsequently expanded use of the tool to capture information for the supervision and evaluation process. During this time, the committee first collected feedback from administrators and teachers and then worked with the company to revise the tool as needed, with the ultimate goal being to make data measurable in practical and helpful ways. Using Baseline Edge, teachers were encouraged to create electronic portfolios for themselves; only the summative evaluation exists in both electronic and paper form, the latter for teachers' permanent files. This has been an ongoing process throughout the school year as the tool has been updated several times to reflect the feedback given to Baseline Edge by Reading and other communities.

- **What are the goals of this practice?** Reading's goal of further developing and using the organizational infrastructure of TAP to promote and advance professional development and student learning is very much in line with the characteristics of the Professional Culture lever of excellence which requires that districts and schools actively involve

stakeholders (as appropriate) in decision-making and ensure there is an articulated set of core values that drive behavior and decisions. The lever also calls for an organizational culture that supports open and honest communication, continuous professional improvement, data-based decision-making, and joint responsibility for student learning and achievement, all of which are hallmarks of the Reading system.

In addition, Reading's promising practice also reflects many of the characteristics of the lever of Supervision and Evaluation, as the district . . .

- Promotes a culture of continuous improvement 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 teachers.
- Incorporates formal evaluations as required by state law. Each teacher, however, receives frequent substantive interaction with knowledgeable observers every year, regardless of the formal evaluation cycle.
- Incorporates multiple sources of data and use student results in a reasonable and responsible way.
- Provides evaluators with extensive professional development and support to ensure compatibility and congruence with one another, proficiency in observing and analyzing instruction, and skill at communicating instructional feedback. Evaluator professional development is provided each year to those new to the evaluator role, and periodic updates are conducted for all personnel.
- **How does this practice reflect the district's mission and core values?**  
The Reading Public School district believes that it can and should always be looking for ways to grow and improve strategically to meet the needs of its students and that teamwork is an important means to that end. For that reason, the implementation of a supervision and evaluation system whose tools reinforce those beliefs has been welcomed and embraced by the district.
- **What grade levels are applicable?** PreK-12
- **How did you implement this practice so that it has been more**

**successful than others you have used?** Some years past, negotiations between the administration and the teachers' union on various issues have taken many sessions; this past year, bargaining of the new tool took just 45 minutes because so much groundwork at the district level had already been completed by the TAP committee. There has been increasing conversation on teaching and learning in the district and greater collaboration among staff as a result of the goal setting process.

- **How has this practice changed your district?** Reading's use of a committee structure to assist in the implementation of a complex initiative has proved to be value-added. Conversations at both the district and building level are much more focused on teaching and learning than on procedures and processes. As such, the district continues to examine how to find time for evaluators and teachers to have quality conversations with one another.
- **What are the resources (time, money, materials, etc.) required for successful implementation?** In building an infrastructure to support teaching and learning, Reading has relied on first developing and then expanding existing structures, neither of which constituted any additional costs for the district. For example, the work of the TAP committee in creating resources for supervision and evaluation superseded the new state system because some of what Reading was trying to accomplish occurred before the new system had been rolled out. Thus the cost to the district for piloting was more in time than money.

However, as implementation progressed, the district has incurred some professional development costs related to training administrators on evaluator inter-rater reliability, costs paid for by Race to the Top monies. Also, the district is continuing its contract with Baseline Edge at a yearly cost negotiated with the vendor.

**12. Please note the attached:**

Reading Public Schools' *Educator Self-Assessment and Goals Development Workbook*, which is one of the tools used to implement and advance the highlighted practice.

