

Promising Practices and Implementation Tools

1. Names & Positions: Dr. Paul Dakin, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Dianne Kelly, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Christopher Malone, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

2. Emails: pdakin@revere.mec.edu, dkelly@revere.mec.edu,
cmalone@revere.mec.edu **Phone:** 781-286-8245

3. Lever Addressed: School Structure

4. Title of Promising Practice: Structure of An Effective District-Wide Steering Committee

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

6. Applicable Grade Levels: Pre-K-12

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

This practice models the district's mission and core values in that it

- Engages all educators in the decision making process
- Focuses on the "moral imperative" or what is best for the kids

8. Goals of This Practice:

- Manage and provide oversight for the district-wide change process, including accountability for how the following five purposes are accomplished:
 1. Strengthen/optimize each of the seven levers of educator expertise
 2. Align the levers and eliminate overlap
 3. Infuse appropriate elements of the knowledge base into each lever
 4. Integrate the seven lever plans with other district initiatives
 5. Use the key principles of successful district change to guide the work
- Ensure effective communication
- Serve as the strategic decision making body

9. Description of This Practice:

Revere Public Schools formed seven Sub-Committees that focused on key areas of school improvement. These are:

- School Structure
- Professional Development
- Supervision and Evaluation

- Induction
- Teacher Leadership
- Professional Culture
- Recruitment, Hiring and Placement

As each group began their work and set goals throughout the year, it was clear that each of these sub-committees were intertwined in a number of ways and needed an effective mechanism through which each group's plans and ideas could be filtered. To that end, a district Steering Committee was formed whose charge is to oversee and coordinate all goals and initiatives set forth by the seven sub-committees as well as to serve as the decision making body. Given that there was already a School Structure Sub-committee in place when the Steering Committee was formed, it is important to note the distinction between the two. While the Steering Committee serves as the "Macro", or larger umbrella group, the School Structure Lever Sub-Committee serves as a more of a "micro" group and focuses on organizational structures at the building based level. For instance, a proposal has been submitted to the Steering Committee to pilot a flex time schedule at one elementary school. (School Structure Sub-committee goals and objectives are attached as an implementation tool.)

Broad representation was achieved by ensuring that each member of the Steering Committee had a secondary role either by serving as a liaison on a lever sub-committee, or assuming a role specific to the functioning of the Steering Group. For instance, the President of the Teacher Union serves as the Secretary for the group and provides the minutes after each meeting. The liaisons to the sub groups bring back issues, problems, accomplishments etc. to the larger group, which then opens up a broader means of communication amongst and between each lever sub-committee.

As a result, this guiding coalition of educators serves as the umbrella group who shares the overall district perspective for sustaining and improving instructional practices in Revere. The Assistant Superintendent describes this group as a "highly functioning team".

Each committee is composed of Pre-K-12 representation from a range of teachers, student support staff, curriculum leaders, union leadership and administration, who take off their individual hats and focus on issues from a district wide perspective. In total, there are over seventy teachers and

administrators who serve on either the Steering Committee or the other seven sub-committees. This broad participation goes along way in reinforcing and communicating the importance of addressing issues and solving problems from a big picture viewpoint.

At the end of the 2012 school year, a summit meeting was scheduled so that each lever sub-committee could report their progress and recommendations to the larger Steering Committee. Noticing a number of potential connections between the efforts of each sub committee, the Steering Committee devised a round robin structure so that overlapping sub-committees could subsequently meet with each other to share goals, process and progress. (See attached Round Robin matrix.)

To date, these corresponding groups have met for three sessions, comparing and coordinating recommendations and funding requests. One example of concrete results from these meetings has been with the Supervision and Evaluation and Professional Development Committees who are now working with the Induction Committee to restructure the Induction Program in two ways:

- 1.) Differentiate the program for different types of new teachers
- 2.) Develop a strategy to "on-board" new teachers into the new educator evaluation system.

Feedback on this integrated approach from the majority of sub-committee members has been very positive, and there is enthusiasm among groups for additional meetings to occur.

Thus far, the Steering Committee has spent considerable time discussing process vs. details of an initiative underway in any one group. For instance, the Steering group grappled with what the process should be for each sub-committee to submit proposals, i.e. how they would be judged, how they would be funded and what the proposal format should look like. This attention to process yielded an efficient and fair standard for each sub-committee to reach when deciding on future proposals.

How This Practice Addresses Criteria for This School Structure Lever:

As detailed below, this promising practice exemplifies many of the criteria necessary for continual school improvement:

The superintendent at the district level and the principal at the school level ensure that organizational structures are in place to support teaching and learning elements such as common formative assessment practices; well-articulated and aligned curricula; standards; adequate resources; adequate time to meet, collaboration and communication; learner-centered schedules and communication protocols.

Characteristics:

School day and school year calendars provide ample time for instruction and ample time for teachers to engage in ongoing professional growth with colleagues who share content and/or students.

District uses data in meaningful ways to help educators improve instruction. Educators have access to clear, consistent, standards-based curriculum, pacing, guides, assessments, and materials.

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

- The Steering Committee serves as the umbrella structure for the district, whose members are also members of all seven sub-committees, so there is enhanced collaboration, communication, coordination, and a systems thinking approach through which all decisions relative to school improvement goals are filtered.
- The seven Lever sub-committees are more collaborative and inclusive than past groups, and committee initiatives are coordinated rather than fragmented.
- Group norms were developed to ensure focus, fairness and whole team responsibility.
- Rather than working in separate committees that may not communicate with each other, Revere's Round Robin approach has resulted in more transparency, engagement and alignment of efforts between working groups, resulting in more collaborative action plans.
- This integrated approach has provided the opportunity for many educators

who may have

been used to operating just within their classroom spheres to view what's best for students

through a broader lens, and become system thinkers. Another by-product has been a

deeper understanding and respect for how central administration must balance all

constituent needs throughout the district.

- The Round Robin approach allows central office administration and other Steering

Committee members the opportunity to see how each sub-committee plans might fit

together as puzzle pieces carefully connecting to the district's big picture improvement

initiatives.

11. How This Practice Changed The District or School:

- Engagement of K-12 teachers, coordinators, teacher union leaders & administrators has

generated a deeper sense of ownership and trust. This also speaks to the positive culture

that exists in Revere, which will be the focus of another promising practice highlighted in

this district.

- All members are on equal ground, meaning their titles and roles are dismissed when

meeting as a group. The free flow of thought that ensues signals that the Steering

Committee is truly operating as a body of collective ideas in the spirit of collaboration.

- The collaborative decision making process, or "cross pollination" of ideas amongst all

committees has had a positive impact on how resources and funding are thoughtfully

allocated.

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

Implementation:

Skillfully managed time for teachers, coordinators and administration to participate in one or more committees during and after the school day. Next year, the Steering Committee is planning to commit 3 hrs. per month for this rich and rewarding work to continue.

13. Tools You Used To Implement Or Advance This Practice:**See separate attachments:**

- Steering Committee Charge
- Steering Committee Norms
- Round Robin Chart
- School Structure Sub-Committee Goals