

Middle School Principal School Board Report :

November 17, 2008

TEACHING FOR LEARNING:

CURRICULUM:

The Middle and High School teachers met on Thursday November 13th for a full day of in-service and collaboration. This is the second meeting of the school year where collaboration of ELA teachers has occurred across building levels. Amy Kilbridge, the ELA content specialist from the ISD is helping to direct these meetings. We are updating and revising curriculum based on this collaborative process. Thursday, November 14th is the first day for science teachers Jeremy Beck and Sandy Hunt to attend the 1st of two in-services on the review of Science kits for our Middle School curriculum. The second day is scheduled for November 21st.

INSTRUCTION:

Several teachers from the Middle School have been attending workshops on working with autistic students. The information they receive will help them to more effectively teach the growing number of students who fall on the Autistic spectrum.

Two teachers from the MS will be attending an in-service on teaching writing across the curriculum next week. Writing is a curricular area that we have been working with last year and again this year. Our goal is to more effectively teach the writing process thereby increasing our writing scores on the state tests. They will be presenting this information to other staff members at the next professional development day on November 26th.

The advisory/homeroom which was implemented this fall continues to be evaluated. Parents were surveyed at the fall Parent/Teacher conference with 52% of the parents agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement: "I believe the schedule change has benefited my child academically". Advisory time will continue to be time for teachers to work with individual students on academics. It is also a time for students to study for tests, work on homework or work with "Study Island".

Evaluation will continue throughout the year.

Teachers have been continuing to meet with their homeroom classes a few times a month to work on team building and goal setting. Our scarecrow competition was a big hit with the winning award going to "Norman's Neon's". There were some very creative ideas.

We have completed MEAP testing. The final tests were mailed on October 30th. We are expecting results sometime in January.

TECHNOLOGY:

Now that MEAP testing has been completed, the use of the "Study Island" computer program can begin again. This program had been suspended throughout the testing window.

The STARNET work group continues to review the instructional software for group purchase. We are presently evaluating the potential use of a writing tool called Criterion and a program for high school credit recovery called NovaNet. Final decisions on pricing should occur by the end of February, with our final decision made by the end of March.

The STARNET group has also decided to move forward on a single student information system. The system chosen is "Power-School" by the makers of Pearson Inform. This system, should we choose to purchase it, will include features for office management, teacher grading and a parent portal. The ISD is exploring the group pricing options for schools who are interested.

ASSESSMENT:

During the next PD in November, middle School teachers will be determining the effectiveness of using writing prompts as assessment tools at the end of each grade level for middle school students.

Based on the latest research in assessment, the 7th and 8th grade Math teachers are beginning the use of standardized assessments to grade all students (see attached). This process grades students on their knowledge not completion of the math standards. Their goal is to better prepare students for the more rigorous math requirements students now face in high school.

LEADERSHIP:

COLLABORATIVE TIME:

The Positive Behavioral Support committee has done a wonderful job continuing to plan for homeroom activities, including our Fall Festival on Halloween. We had about 140 Middle School students who attended the event. Feedback has been very positive. 87% of our parents surveyed at fall P/T conferences agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I think that the reward program which includes the Fall Festival, is a good way to motivate my child to follow the SOAR traits." The group will continue to meet to plan homeroom teambuilding and goal setting activities.

Our scheduling group will continue to meet to evaluate and update the new schedule and handbook changes for next school year.

The PD committee has met on a regular basis to plan our next Professional Development planned for November 26th. The morning will begin with district staff involved with the FINO process. The afternoon will continue with building level in-service on the writing process.

SHARED LEADERSHIP:

The Failure is Not an Option (FINO) work group met on October 27th to plan for our next full day of professional development. The group began the day reviewing the 6 principles of highly effective schools. The majority of the time was spent on updates to the mission statement based on newest research related to this. The group has planned the morning session for the November 26th PD.

PERSONNEL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

MENTORING PROGRAM:

Mentors continue to meet with and observe new teachers. Mentors reviewed individual development plans with their mentees before new teachers met with me to review these plans.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

COMMUNICATION:

Ongoing parent communication continues with the parent e-mail of announcements and the school newsletter. The parent e-mail list for our student announcement appears to be a great success as we continue to include new parents to the list. The second Middle School Menagerie will be sent out on November 21st.

We had a very successful turn-out for Parent/Teacher conferences with all but 48 of our parents attending the evening conferences.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Our Middle School PTO was a great help planning, decorating and helping to run the Fall Festival. The PTO continues to meet at 6:00 pm on the 3rd Monday of each month in the Middle School conference room.

Eighth grade trip planning continues with the fundraising efforts of students, parents and community members. We are greatly appreciative of all the efforts and donations provided.

There will be a parent (community) assembly on internet safety hosted by the Attorney Generals office on Tuesday, January 6th at 6:30 pm in the HS Commons.

DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT:

PEARSON INFORM:

November 11th is the professional development opportunity I will be attending at the ISD on the Use of Pearson Inform Data in classroom instruction. I am planning to bring ideas back to teachers to continue the use of data to guide instruction.

OTHER:

The 7th and 8th grade girl's volleyball began their season on November 3rd. Their season will continue up to Christmas break.

Our assembly with former Ohio State football player Joel Penton was a big success. Joel talked with students about making and keeping commitments. Students were very focused and attentive during the assembly and the feedback was very positive.

Middle School students will hear the age appropriate version of the internet safety and cyber-bullying assembly in the afternoon of January 6th.